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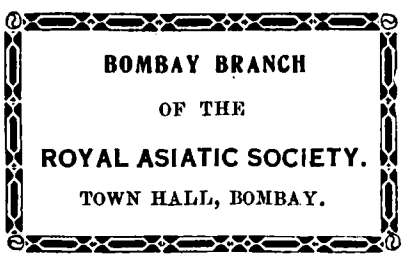

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JOAN OF ARC,

AND THE

Times of Charles the Seventh, King of France.

MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

JOAN OF ARC,

AND THE

Times of Charles the Seventh, King of France.

BY MRS. BRAY,

AUTHOR OF

'THE GOOD ST. LOUIS,' 'THE REVOLT OF THE PROTESTANTS OF THE CEVENNES,'
'THE WHITE HOODS,' 'HARTLAND FOREST,' 'LIFE OF STOTHARD,' ETC.

36167

'I can deliver France!
Yea, I must save the country! God is in me.
I speak not, think not, feel not of myself,
And whither He shall send me I must go;
And whatso He commands, that I must speak;
And whatso is His will, that I must do;
And I must put away all fear of men,
Lest He in wrath confound me.'

SOUTHEY'S *Joan of Arc.*

LONDON:
GRIFFITH AND FARRAN,
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MDCCCLXXIV.

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PREFACE.

THE subject of the following pages was suggested by the study of the French chroniclers of the fifteenth century. Our English historians, in treating the events of French history which are interwoven with our own, give generally but brief notices of the leading actors in them, and omit those minor details which would have contributed to form a vivid picture of the social state of the period with which they are concerned.

The early French chroniclers supply many particulars of this description; but their quaint style, their obsolete language, and their tedious repetitions, repel the modern reader, who requires to be allured and stimulated by composition of a more rapid and lively character. These old writers, however, are singularly rich in original matter, and are usually witnesses of a very trustworthy kind. Most of them, as Monstrelet, Commines, Oliver de la Marche, and others, write about persons known to themselves, and events that had fallen under their own observation, or about those that were within the memory

of their fathers. Such chroniclers are the chief authorities for the present work; but French writers of more recent date, and most especially Henri Martin, have been carefully read and studied; and for the interesting particulars of the trial of Joan of Arc, the latter has been taken as the principal authority.

A. E. B.

BROMPTON, 1873.

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THE AUTHORITIES CONSULTED FOR THE PRESENT WORK WERE PRINCIPALLY THESE:

Monstrelet, vols. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
Memoires de la Pucelle, 15th Century.
Memoires de Richemont, by Guillaume Gruel, 15th Century.
Histoire de Philip De Commines.
Sieur D'Argenton.
Memoires de Pierre de Finan, 15th Century.
Memoires D'Illiers, 15th Century.
Memoires D'Olivier De La Marche, 15th Century.
Memoires de Jacques Du Clercq, 15th Century.
Memoires Jean De Troyes, 16th Century.
Letter by the Lord Guy De Laval.
Journal de Bourgeois De Paris, 15th Century.
Barante's Dukes of Burgundy, vols. 3 and 4.
Henri Martin, Histoire de France, vol. 6.
Precis de l'Histoire de France, vol. 1.
Dictionnaire Historique de Moreri, vol. 1.
History of France in the Universal History, vol. 20.
Hollingshed's Chronicle.
Hall's Chronicle.
Hume's History of England.

JOAN OF ARC.

CHAPTER I.

Treaty of Troyes—Henry v.—Charles vi.—Duke of Burgundy—their Compact disinherits the Dauphin—Queen Isabella's Hatred of her Son—Chastisement by the King of Bois-Bourbon—Princess Catherine married to Henry of England—Henry besieges Montereau—the Governor will not yield—Henry hangs the Prisoners—he besieges Melun—Charles vi. brought before the Gates of the Town—Henry enters Paris in Triumph—Charles accompanies him—the Dauphin appeals against the Treaty of Troyes—he is driven beyond the Loire—summoned before the Parliament—escapes—Catherine gives birth to a Son—Henry and Catherine return to France—Royal Banquet at Paris—Charles neglected—Death of Henry v.—his Body taken to England—Death of Charles vi.—his obsequies at St. Denis.

HE great victories of our chivalrous Henry v. in France; the imbecility into which the unfortunate monarch of that country, Charles vi., had fallen; with the league formed between Henry and the Duke of Burgundy,—led to the most extraordinary treaty of peace between the ruling princes of three powerful states to be found in the history of the fifteenth

century—the Treaty of Troyes. The principal articles on which the parties agreed were these—

That Henry of England should espouse Catherine, the French Princess; that during the life of her father, the reigning King, Henry should act for him as Regent, or head of the Government, and on his decease should succeed to the throne of France, and his heirs after him, to the exclusion of the natural heir, Charles the Dauphin; that Burgundy should unite his arms to those of Henry and Charles VI., in order to overcome the adherents of the Dauphin, who was pronounced an enemy to the State; and that no peace should be concluded with him without the consent of the contracting parties.[1]

This was hard measure for the young Prince; but various causes had combined to create for him powerful enemies in Henry, the Duke of Burgundy, and his own mother. Against the first-named he was engaged, though with a very insufficient force, in the south, where the English had considerable possessions. Burgundy was furious to revenge upon his head the death of his father, Duke Jean-Sans-Peur, who not very long before had been assassinated, if not by the immediate concurrence of the Dauphin (who was present), certainly without his interference to prevent it; and his mother's hatred arose from her own evil and imperious character.

Isabella of Bavaria, the wife of Charles VI., taking advantage of his mental weakness, had amassed large

[1] Monstrelet gives the treaty at large, vol. v. p. 185.

sums of the public money for her own private uses. Some time before Henry's great victories these sums had been seized by the Constable of France, the Count of Armagnac, compelled by the necessities of the State, with the consent of the Dauphin, then a youth of sixteen, and entirely ruled by the Armagnac faction. Isabella never forgave her son his consent to the transaction, and treated him with a severe and persecuting spirit. If the chroniclers of the time speak truth, he retaliated her resentment by awakening in his father, during an interval of his sanity, a feeling of jealous indignation respecting her conduct towards her favourite gentleman of the household—Bois-Bourbon. The King caused the favourite to be seized at Vincennes, tied up in a leather sack, with a label attached to it, 'Let pass the justice of the King,' and thrown into the Seine, where he was drowned—drowning in those days being a common mode of criminal punishment. The Queen he sent a prisoner to Tours. Thence she contrived to open a correspondence with the Duke of Burgundy, who eventually procured her release. When that potentate entered into an alliance with Henry, the betrothed of her daughter Catherine, she joined him heart and soul in the matter of the treaty, which was to preclude her son, the Dauphin, from all hope of succeeding to the throne of his father.

Henry, after his marriage, lost no time in following up the advantages he had gained. He laid siege to many places adverse to his pretensions, and true to

their native King and his successor. Sens and Montereau were among these. The former readily yielded, but the latter held out. The governor of the garrison in the castle was a Sir Peter de Guitry, who made a gallant defence. In the course of the action, from 16 to 20 prisoners were taken by the English. The town was at length captured, but the castle would not surrender. This irritated the impatient Henry, for he was in haste to depart for other conquests. He therefore sent his prisoners, under a strong guard, to hold a parley with the governor from the ditches without the walls of the fortress. They fell on their knees, and in piteous accents implored him to yield, as by so doing he would save their lives; and considering the large force the King of England had brought against him, it was impossible he could much longer hold out. The governor replied, that they must make the best terms they could with their victor, for he was resolute not to surrender. The prisoners knew full well there was nothing to hope from Henry's mercy, and begged therefore to be allowed to speak with their families and friends who were within the castle. This was permitted, and they took leave of each other with tears and bitter lamentations.

When they were brought back to the camp, Henry ordered a gallows to be erected, and had them all hanged within sight of those within the castle. Eight days after it surrendered. Monstrelet, who relates this barbarous

act, makes no other comment upon it than to tell us that the Lord de Guitry was much blamed by both parties for having suffered the luckless prisoners to be put to death, and holding out for so short a time afterwards. Hume, who frequently gives Monstrelet as his authority, passes in silence this cruel circumstance when speaking of the capture of Montereau. Too many of our English writers, dazzled by the halo which the genius of Shakspeare has thrown around Henry v., pass unnoticed the unsparing cruelty which so often marked his victorious course in France.

There was in him, also, a sad want of even decent bearing towards his imbecile father-in-law, that formed a blot in his chivalrous character. When the town of Melun (which Henry had so blockaded that it was impossible it could long hold out) refused to surrender, he caused Charles to be brought before its gates, in order to give the besieged an excuse for yielding at the presence of their sovereign. The snare, however, did not succeed, and the summons was answered with spirit by the citizens. They would, they said, cheerfully throw open their gates to admit Charles, their King, alone; but they would never yield obedience to a King of England, the ancient enemy of France. Poor Charles was therefore obliged to return to the camp of his son-in-law (who managed him in all things just as he pleased), and there he remained for some weeks. 'Not indeed,' says the chronicler, 'with his former state and pomp,

for in comparison with past times it was a poor sight now to see him.'

Henry continued the siege very actively, conducting the operations in person, whilst Charles remained in his camp. The Court of the King of England was more magnificently attended than at any other period of his reign. His Queen was with him, 'grandly attended by dames and damsels,' who resided in a house which Henry had erected for them near his own tents, and at such a distance from the town that the cannon (for he used artillery in the siege) might not annoy the ladies. Every day, at sunrise and nightfall, eight or ten clarions, and various other instruments, 'played most melodiously' for an hour before the King of France's tent. Possibly the harmony was intended to soothe the dark spirit that overshadowed him, like another Saul.[1] Melun held out till the Dauphin sent an emissary to inform the governor that he had not forces enough to oppose the King of England and the Duke of Burgundy, who now had combined their troops to carry on the siege, and the town yielded.

Soon after, Henry, in his capacity as Regent, entered Paris in triumph, the childlike monarch riding by his side. The citizens in vast numbers came out to meet them. The houses were hung with rich tapestries, carols were sung in the streets, and the bells rang out a joyous peal. Henry rode on the right hand, Charles on the left; the Dukes of Bedford and Clarence followed. The Duke of

[1] Monstrelet, vol. v. p. 212; *Mémoire de Pierre de Jenin*, p. 464.

Burgundy showed his independence by riding with his train on a line with the royal personages, but on the opposite side of the street. The procession of the Paris clergy halted in the square, and presented the holy relics that they bore to be kissed by the sovereigns. On their being first offered to the King of France, he turned to his son-in-law, and bade him kiss them first. But Henry, who knew how to behave courteously in public, putting his hand to his hood, and bowing to King Charles, declined, and would only kiss them after him.

They dismounted at the door of the Church of Notre Dame, made their offerings and thanksgivings (poor Charles for his own towns and people being conquered by an English king), and remounting, proceeded in state, the foreign sovereign to the Palace of the Louvre, and the native one to the Hôtel de St. Pol. The whole city of Paris was given up to festivity; the wine ran in conduits in the streets; the people danced, sang, and lighted bonfires. And all for joy that there was peace between the two kings; for nobody seemed to give a thought to the disinherited Dauphin.

Henry speedily obtained from the Parliament, who dared not stir a finger against the victor of Agincourt, a ratification of the treaty, and again turned his arms against the royalist party which adhered to the Dauphin; that young Prince having declared the treaty of Troyes to be altogether unjustifiable, and appealing to God, to St. Denis,

and to his sword to defend his right.[1] No one could blame him for a feeling and a spirit so natural; but neither he nor his supporters were a match for a Henry or a Burgundy. He was soon driven beyond the Loire, and in danger of destruction. Nor did he at this period show a disposition, by any great effort, to brave and overcome his adverse fortune. Considering himself unequal to any further contest, he temporized, and retired for a while into Auvergne, attempting no further opposition to the rival successor of his father's throne.

Soon after these transactions, Henry's affairs required his presence in England, and he determined to cross the seas without delay. Before his departure, having promised the Duke of Burgundy that he would endeavour to make the young Prince account for the part he had taken in the death of the late Duke, he caused a trumpet and a herald, with all the customary ceremonies, to summon 'Charles, Duke of Touraine and Dauphin, to appear at the marble table, before the Parliament of Paris, to answer for himself and his accomplices to the charge made against him and

[1] He had just cause to complain, for the clause that renounced him in the treaty of Troyes ran thus: 'Considering the horrible and enormous crimes that have been perpetrated in our kingdom of France' (they were resistance to the English in the towns they besieged), 'by Charles, calling himself Dauphin of Vienne, it is agreed that neither our said son Henry nor our well-beloved Philip, Duke of Burgundy, shall enter into any treaty of peace or concord with the said Charles without the consent of us and our council, and the three estates of the realm for that purpose assembled.' The first signature to this treaty was that of the Dauphin's weak and unfortunate father!

them respecting the murder of the late Jean-Sans-Peur, Duke of Burgundy.'[1]

But the Dauphin, who knew well that the Bastille was very near the Parliament, and that his enemies would not be slow to find a pretext for giving him a lodgment therein, was much too wise to answer such a summons; he neither went himself, nor sent any one to reply to the appellant. He was therefore deemed contumacious by the Parliament, sentenced to be banished the realm, and pronounced incapable of succeeding to any lands or lordships, or to the succession of the crown of France. From this sentence, as will be seen in due course, the Dauphin and his adherents made their appeal to the sword; but at present we must leave them and speak of Henry and Catherine.

After giving birth in England to a son, the young Queen crossed the seas, landed at Harfleur, and, escorted by the Duke of Bedford, proceeded to meet her husband (who had returned to France some time before herself) at Vincennes, where, attended by a noble retinue, he came from Meaux to receive her. Even if seen in the humblest, who can describe the charm attached to youthful beauty? But when it comes before us combined with royalty and queenly state, it seems as if more than of earthly mould. So did it strike those who then beheld Catherine. Her infant son was in her arms; and what is more lovely or

[1] Princes and persons of high rank were summoned for offences to appear before the marble table of the Parliament. See Monstrelet.

endearing than the sight of a fair young mother with her innocent offspring on her bosom? 'She was received by the King and his company,' says Monstrelet, 'as if she had been an angel from heaven.'

Great was the public rejoicing; and Charles, who seems to have been sufficiently sensible at the time, expressed pleasure at the return of his daughter and at the sight of his little grandson. His Queen likewise welcomed them. On the 30th of May the royal party entered Paris in state. The King and Queen of England were lodged in the Palace (then a castle) of the Louvre, and Charles and Isabella at the Hôtel de St. Pol. Both households celebrated the feast of Pentecost, which fell soon after.

Henry and his Queen kept it in solemn state, apparelled gorgeously in ermine and cloth of gold, the crowns of royalty encircling their brows, radiant with diamonds and precious stones. Surrounded by princes, peers, bannerets, knights, and a host of the fairest dames and damsels of the land, they were ushered into the festal hall by sound of trumpet and clarion, and took their seats at a table covered with the rarest viands and the choicest wines. Again the trumpet sounded; and the doors being thrown open, in rushed the citizens of Paris to look on the splendid scene; of which the beautiful Catherine, in the midst of her ladies, like a rose in a gay parterre, was the loveliest flower of all. The Parisians gazed till they were tired; but as neither meats nor even a cup of wine

was offered to them, it became tantalizing to look on such abundance and not to taste it; and they went away dissatisfied, saying that in former days, when the French kings kept open court, meat and drink was given to all comers to their heart's content.

But the reigning King of France, the feeble in body and in mind, who in his palmy days, and whilst he was himself, had been so liberal and gracious to his people—where was he? In the somewhat obscure Hôtel de St. Pol, seated at table with his heartless Queen, with few attendants, little or no observance, deserted by the nobles, his kingdom and government passed away, and himself considered with a disrespect somewhat like that shown by Regan to her father Lear, when he had given the staff out of his own hand:

> 'Oh, sir, you are old;
> Nature in you stands on the very verge
> Of her confines. You should be rul'd and led
> By some discretion that discerns your state
> Better than you yourself.'

Many loyal hearts among his French subjects saw how he was neglected, and wept for him; but fear follows conquest with unerring power, and the dread of Henry's arms was universal. Soon after his return to France he laid an impost on silver for the purpose of a new coinage. This gave dissatisfaction; there was much murmuring, but in a very subdued tone. Perhaps the citizens fancied that the word *Agincourt* might be stamped upon the coin, the

recollection and the terror of that fatal field being fresh in every mind.

But Henry's triumphs and displays of regal splendour were of no long continuance. In less than two years after his marriage, and only nine months after the birth of his son, he was himself conquered by the power that levels all estates, and lays all earthly glory in the dust. In the midst of new plans of policy and enterprises of arms, Henry fell sick. His state was considered serious; he called around his sick-bed his uncle of Exeter, his brothers Clarence and Gloucester, and sent a hasty summons for his eldest brother, the Duke of Bedford. To them he committed the care and interests of his successor and of both his realms. He desired that the Regency for France on behalf of his son should in the first instance be offered to the Duke of Burgundy; but if he declined, then that Bedford should assume it. He appointed Gloucester in the same position for England, and the Earl of Warwick to be the personal guardian of the child. He further recommended Bedford to keep in durance the French Princes, then prisoners from Agincourt, in London, particularly the Duke of Orleans; and above all, if he should fail in conquering the whole of France, or in securing the crown of that country for the infant Henry, never to enter on any treaty with Charles the Dauphin unless he consented to resign Normandy wholly to the crown of England. Finally, he recommended to their care his Queen, who was absent. He ended by a melancholy

summary of his own reign, and by a no less sadly prophetical one of that of his infant son: 'Henry born at Monmouth,' said the dying man, 'was destined to reign briefly and conquer largely; but Henry born at Windsor will reign long and lose all.'[1]

After this discourse, which somewhat exhausted him, he sent for his physicians, and insisted on being told how long they expected he might live. On learning that his hour fast approached, he ordered the attendance of his confessor and his chaplains, and desired them to chant the seven penitential psalms. When they came to that in which is the verse '*Muri Hierusalem*,' he stopped them, and said that it had been his purpose, after wholly subduing the realm of France to his obedience, and restoring to it peace, to have formed an expedition to conquer the kingdom of Jerusalem.

In these last awful moments of a life, from the time of man's estate principally spent in tumult and battle, Henry expressed some sense of regret for his wars of aggression in support of his alleged title to the throne of France. But with a feeling common in wrong-doers when pricked in conscience, he excused himself to himself, by charging on others the wrong he had committed, saying that the clergy had assured him his title was good, and that he ought to take up arms to assert it.

This was altogether false; he had no title. There was no solid ground for the pretensions made by Edward III.

[1] Hollingshed.

to the Gallic crown; and even had they been founded on truth or justice, his right could not have descended to Henry v., whose father, himself not in the direct line, had dethroned Edward's grandson, Richard II., and usurped his place. Henry's claim was prompted by his spirit of aggressive ambition, supported by his sword, and rendered only too successful by his intrepid courage and genius for the art of war. Man must not judge; but with many who looked to a higher power than that of mere worldly policy or circumstances, it seemed as a righteous retribution when the house of York set up its claim against that of Lancaster in opposition to the infant heir, the successor of the redoubted Henry to the throne of England. We return to the death of that Prince.

At the close of the solemn service he had commanded, Henry, commending his soul to God and the saints, breathed his last on the 31st day of August 1422, in the thirty-fourth year of his age. His body was embalmed and carried to Notre Dame with great funeral pomp and ceremony. Thence it was removed to Rouen and afterwards to England, where it was finally interred in the Abbey of Westminster. A costly monument was erected over the grave, and an effigy of the deceased King (having the head wrought of silver) placed upon it.[1]

Exactly six weeks after the death of Henry, on the 22d of October, being the commemoration of the ten

[1] The head was stolen during the civil wars of Charles I.

thousand virgins, towards the close of day, the heavens lowered, and the clouds hung over Paris like a pall. The lingering light was fast declining, when the great bell of Notre Dame was heard to

'Toll, toll through the silence of evening.'

Those who were in the streets stopped, inquired and looked anxiously at each other. It was the soul bell, calling on all to pray for a departing spirit.

The bell of Notre Dame tolled but for the mighty dying, or the mighty dead. For whom then now? Soon a solemn strain arose within the walls of the sacred edifice. It had a melancholy cadence—it was a *requiem* chant. Charles VI. was dead.[1]

That unfortunate King was released from the bondage of mortality and all its afflictions, and from the sorrows of a darkened mind.

'Lord! in Thine own good time Thou mad'st his darkness light.'

So utterly neglected had he been, that, although long ill and for some time confined to his bed, so little was known of his state, that his death took his subjects by surprise. When he breathed his last, there was with him neither wife, nor dear relative, nor friend; only his chancellor, his chamberlain, his confessor, and a few inferior persons. But, as if to make up in ceremony for what had been wanting in reverence and affection, a magnificent funeral

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi.; *Mémoire de Pierre de Jenin*, p. 506.

was ordered for him. The particulars are curious, and show so much of the customs of the time, that we will briefly notice them.

Soon after the announcement of his death, the Lords of the Council, the members of Parliament, all the chief functionaries, and great numbers even of the commonalty, came to look at the unfortunate King as he lay upon the bed in which he died. After this exhibition of mortality, the body was placed in a leaden coffin, and so kept for many days, waiting the arrival of the Duke of Bedford. In the interval, masses were said for the repose of his soul in all the churches of Paris; and on the 10th of November his remains were borne in grand procession to the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

The bishops and abbots, in full pontificals, with jewelled mitres, chasubles, gloves, and crosiers, came first; then followed the inferior clergy, with the doctors of the Universities and the public officials. The litter on which rested the coffin was borne by the King's foresters; the chief members of the Court of Parliament supported the pall. The chamberlain and pages of the royal household followed. Then, at a little distance from the body, the Duke of Bedford, as Regent, walked alone. The provosts and merchants of Paris, having serjeants-at-arms between them, were ranged on either side.

Monstrelet deemed it a slight that no prince of the blood of France attended the funeral, 'which,' he adds, 'was a melancholy consideration, when it is remembered what

great power and prosperity the King enjoyed during the early part of his reign.' Surely, when the chronicler made this remark, he must have forgotten that the Dauphin was proscribed, and living at a distance in obscurity; that the Duke of Orleans and other princes were, like imprisoned birds, in the Tower of London, and none to open the door of their cage to let them wing their way to France.

A canopy of cloth of gold on a ground of crimson and azure, ornamented with the *fleur de lis*, was borne over the coffin, on which was laid an effigy formed of wax of the deceased King. A crown of gold glittering with diamonds was on his head. In either hand was placed a shield, the one of gold and the other of silver; and the fingers of the white gloves were adorned with rings. The mantle of blue velvet was lined with ermine, and powdered with the *fleur de lis*.

The procession paused at Notre Dame, where a mass was chanted for the dead by the Patriarch of Constantinople. At the end of the service the *cortége* formed again, and proceeded to the last resting-place of the unfortunate Charles. Half-way between Paris and the Church of St. Denis stood a cross; there the funeral train met the measurers and carriers of salt of Paris, each having a *fleur de lis* on his bosom. By established right, these men now took the place of the foresters, and bore the King's body to the Cross which stood before the entrance to St. Denis, where the Abbot and his

monks, each bearing a lighted torch, stood ready to receive it.

Thence with chanting and singing it was brought into the church, where, after the last solemn rites, Charles was committed to the sepulchre of his forefathers. The Patriarch gave the benediction, the heralds surrounded the grave, when Berry King-at-arms broke his staff as the rest turned their maces downwards, and throwing it upon the coffin, cried in a loud voice, 'May God show mercy and pity to the soul of the late most puissant and most excellent Charles, King of France, our natural sovereign Lord.'

Then 'Amen' resounded in deep response through the vaulted aisles. A pause ensued, when the herald once more broke the hush of the assembly, crying, 'May God grant long life to Henry, by the grace of God King of England, our sovereign Lord.' Again he repeated the proclamation, and the heralds raised their maces and shouted, 'Long live the King!'

There was no response, except from a few of the '*Francois-Anglois*,' who commenced crying, 'Noel! Noel!' 'as if God had come down from heaven.'

Many wept when they remembered the gentleness and bounty of the late King, and said, 'Ah! dear Prince, we shall see you no more; and now that you are gone, we shall have nothing but wars. You are in peace; but we are left to sorrow and tribulation.'

Sixteen thousand of the poor received the funeral dole

at the Church of St. Denis, three *blancs* from the royal treasury being given to each. On the return of the solemn *cortége*, the crowd looked on and murmured when they saw the sword of the Kings of France borne before an Englishman as Regent.[1]

[1] Monstrelet, vols. vi. and vii.; Barante, *Histoire des Ducs de Burgogne*, vol. iii.; Henri Martin, *Histoire de France*, vol. vi.; Hollingshed's *Chronicle; Journal de Paris*, 15th Century; *Précis de L'Histoire de France;* Hume's *History of England; Mémoire de Pierre de Jenin.*

CHAPTER II.

Bedford Regent in France—Marie of Anjou, Wife of Charles VII.—Character of Charles—Cardinal Beaufort Chancellor for England—English Generals and Possessions in France—Bedford resolves on the Conquest of the Kingdom—Charles at Espally—receives News of his Father's Death—his Indolence—Tannegue, Macon, and Louvet—Counsellors lead him to Rochelle—a Council summoned—Accidental Fall of the Chamber—Charles goes to Poitiers—crowned there—Dishonesty of Tannegue—Bedford gains over Burgundy and Brittany—Private Compact between the Dukes—Arthur Earl of Richmond—his romantic History—Interview with his Mother—freed—returns to Brittany—Bedford marries Anne of Burgundy—storms Pont Sur Seine—takes Castle of Ossay—Prisoners brought before him—Friends of Charles raise Troops—prepare to attack Crevant—old Duchess of Burgundy—Earls Salisbury and Suffolk—Charles's Army defeated—Marie of Anjou gives birth to a Son at Bourges—Distress of Charles—Misery of Paris—Origin of the 'Dance of Death.'

A NATION, like a household, cannot serve two masters. That was an unhappy time for the people when the Duke of Bedford, as Regent, claimed for his infant nephew so large a portion of territory in the pleasant land of France, and proposed to conquer all the rest; whilst the rightful heir still clung to a disturbed remnant of his inheritance.

Charles was only twenty years old when his father died.

He was already married to Marie D'Anjou, a daughter of René, the King of Sicily, to whom he had been betrothed in childhood. She was an amiable and accomplished Princess; though, like her father, she entertained a fixed aversion for the Dukes of Burgundy, and was supposed (possibly without foundation) to have encouraged her husband's hostile feelings towards them.

Be this true or false, many of the French nobles, who abhorred the rule of a foreigner, and supported Charles in his claim to the crown, yet considered his ermine to be stained with the blood of Duke Jean-Sans-Peur. For, notwithstanding his repeated disavowal of all participation in the assassination of that Prince, it was not believed he could have been altogether innocent, when he was present at the deed, and showed no displeasure afterwards towards those who committed it.

Charles, though in the course of years he improved in character as a ruler, gave little promise in the earlier part of his career. It was not till he had undergone a long trial in the school of disaster and adversity, that he could claim praise for that circumspection in his policy and vigour in his government which at length overcame the assumption of disaffected nobles, and finally drove the Island conquerors from the realm. When young, Charles was wanting in firmness of purpose, as well as in energy of mind and activity of body. Indolent, except when roused to action for the moment by his friends; deeply tainted with the vices of a Court which,

according to all accounts, had been corrupted by the example of his mother, he had few of those qualities which are considered most becoming in a prince. His manners, however, were affable and popular; but though he was easily led by the favourite of the hour (and most of his favourites were worthless), he was commonly obstinate when opposed by the wise, and generally suspicious of the good.

Such a Prince was no match for the Regent,—a man brave but never rash, firm and able in his policy, just and moderate when no impediment stood in the way of the object he had to gain, but impracticable and even cruel towards all who opposed his measures for the security of the double crown destined for the baby brow of his nephew, the ill-starred Henry VI.

'Bedford,' says the great modern French historian, 'was in the fifteenth century the model of a selfish and Machiavellian patriotism, of that policy without feeling with which the English aristocracy overturned the world.'[1]

From the very day Henry V. breathed his last, Bedford proceeded with great skill to secure his own position and his power. Doubtful of the restless ambition of his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, and fearing he would become troublesome did he assume the independent regency of England, to which he had been named by the deceased monarch, he contrived to make him only

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 89.

his deputy in that country whilst he himself might be absent in France. As a further check on the power of Gloucester, he caused their uncle—the subtle, imperious, and grasping Bishop of Winchester—to be named Chancellor. This man was the Beaufort of our Shakspeare, 'who died and made no sign.' We shall have more to say about him hereafter.[1]

Bedford's policy was far-sighted. In the present position of his affairs, it was a matter of vital consequence to secure the friendship of the proud and ardent Duke of Burgundy. Well did he know how deep-rooted was the hatred that Prince entertained for Charles; and he determined to avail himself of it, in order to secure his active support in the coming struggle which he anticipated with the faction of Armagnac (still so called, though their leader was dead) to win the crown for the Dauphin.

Burgundy had refused to assume the regency for the child Henry; but Bedford endeavoured to give him as much as possible an interest in French concerns. He flattered his pride by concessions and deference, and passed without notice what in his day, under ordinary circumstances, would have been considered an affront,—namely, that Burgundy refused to attend the obsequies of the late Charles VI., because he feared he should be

[1] Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester and Cardinal, great-uncle to Henry VI., was the legitimated son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. See Hume, vol. v.

obliged to give the precedency in the funeral procession to Bedford as Regent of France.

Circumstances combined to strengthen Bedford's power in both countries. In England he had no opponent, and in France but a feeble competitor. His army was formidable in number and exultant in spirits. The victory of Agincourt had made every man in it deem himself invincible. The first generals of the age — Warwick, Salisbury, Suffolk, Talbot, and others — were still alive and ready to take the field; whilst some of the bravest of the royal Princes of France, especially the Duke of Orleans, were prisoners in London or in the Bastille of Paris, and no men of any great note had as yet espoused the Dauphin's quarrel.

Great indeed were the possessions of England in France. Guienne, which came as the portion of Eleanor on her marriage with our Henry II.; the whole of Gascony, Normandy, Artois, Flanders, Champaigne, Picardy, and many other less important provinces and places; and above all, Paris, a city which to a true Parisian was then, even as it is now, the very Paradise of the earth. What with fear, flattery, cajolery, and profit, Paris had in no very long time become reconciled to the English. This had in some measure arisen from the influence of the Court, and the benefit which the city had derived from the influx of rich nobles and knights who first arrived within the walls as the followers of Henry on his marriage with Catherine. The widowed queen of Charles VI. also

warmly patronized the English, and, still cherishing her anger against her son, did all in her power to attach the great city to the interest of the Regent.

The Dauphin was at the Castle of Espally, in Auvergne, when he received the news of his father's death. He was affected by the intelligence more than from his usual indifference might have been expected. He instantly put on mourning; but, by the advice of those about him, on the next day he exchanged his sable suit for royal attire. Apparelled in a crimson robe, and attended by some officers-at-arms wearing tabards, he went to hear mass in the chapel of the Castle, where, the banner of France being unfurled and placed above the altar, he was hailed as King of France. '*Vive le Roi!*' resounded through the old building, a place as circumscribed as were the young King's hopes.

At this period, depressed by ill success, and having formed but a poor opinion of what he called his fortunes (a common pretext with the indolent, who would rather succumb to failure than make the effort necessary to rise above it), had Charles been left to himself, he would probably have let things take their course, without heeding what that might be. But he had those about him who looked to rise by his means; and some, with a nobler aim, looked to him as the legitimate Prince, by the assertion of whose right they hoped to rouse the people of France to expel the foreigner. Tannegui, Le Macon, and Louvet were among these, and were his principal

counsellors. They would not, therefore, let him leave his cause to stagnate, but roused him like a trumpet-peal to arms.

In order to gain for him the support of the most influential of his people, they led him from castle to castle, and from town to town. He halted at Rochelle, a maritime place, with a most sturdy and independent population, that entertained no English propensities. To these he granted whatever privileges they were desirous to possess for the interests of their commerce and navigation.

All went so well, that by the advice of his friends Charles summoned a Council of his Barons, to be held in the great hall of the city. A throne was extemporized for the occasion, and fortunately fastened to the wall. But for this circumstance, the dispute for the crown of France might have been very summarily settled by a fracture of the head the most entitled to wear it.

The room was old, the floor much decayed; and, unable to support the weight of the numbers now assembled, it gave way, and carried with it barons, counsellors, and citizens of all grades. Many were killed, many maimed for life, and several wounded. Only Charles, whose chair of state was nailed fast to the wall, escaped with little or no injury.

But though, so far, Charles's right was undisputed amongst his friends, the more regular ceremony of a coronation was wanting; and the anointing with the holy oil was in those days considered essential to the making

of the kings of France. True it was that Rheims, the sacred city so anciently associated with the ceremony, could not be approached, for both that and the country around were in the hands of the English; and the precious oil, which, according to tradition, came down from heaven on purpose to do honour to Clovis, was in the Abbey of the inaccessible city. But a coronation was deemed imperative; therefore the partisans of Charles prevailed with him to proceed to Poitiers, where, though in an irregular way, he was crowned, and henceforth styled King of France by his friends, and King of Bourges by his enemies — that town being his usual place of residence. Now began the serious strife of arms; Bedford for his nephew, Charles for himself. And at this period, in almost every engagement or circumstance of the contest, Charles was the loser. Yet was Bedford greatly perplexed. He saw the difficulties which beset him as Regent for a child not native born, for whom there was no affection among his subjects,—a child whose father had spread dismay throughout the land—had been obeyed from fear, and had ruled by the force of conquest. Now that the conqueror was gone, the sound in heart began to recover from their fears, and to look around them. Several nobles and princes of the far distant south, such as the Count de Foix and his brother, with many of the Anglo-Gascons, came over to Charles, and acknowledged his right. Even in Paris plots were formed in his favour, but unfortunately discovered, and avenged with great

severity by Bedford. A woman concerned in them was burned alive. These signs of growing disaffection to English rule gave him so much alarm, that he caused an oath of fidelity to himself as Regent to be administered to all the principal citizens of Paris.

Soon after, a new disaster clouded the first real success that had brightened the prospects of Charles; and it was the more vexatious, as it arose from the dishonesty of his finance minister and favourite, Tanagui. Melun had been taken by one of the royalist captains, and his men demanded their pay. Tanagui had received the money to satisfy them from his master's purse, and employed it for his own purposes. So incensed were the soldiers of the garrison, that they pulled down the standard of their King and threw it from the tower of the castle, tore his insignia, the white cross, from their breasts; and finally restored the town to Bedford, which they had just taken from the English.[1]

Without entering into details, it will be enough to state that at this period nothing could be more lamentable than the state of France generally. The rural population—the labourers by whose toil corn and wine and oil could alone be produced—were unable to work with safety; for there was neither castle, town, nor village secure from the scourges of war—fire, sword, and famine. In order to crush Charles, the Regent deemed the best course would be to form a powerful alliance; so that Charles would find

[1] *Histoire de France. Mémoires de Richemont.*

it impossible speedily to take the field against him with anything like a sufficient force, and in the interval there would be time to strengthen and consolidate the English power in France. The alliance which Bedford desired to secure was that of the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany. But there were difficulties in the way, and he did not think his object would be effected by lengthened negotiations, setting forth the advantages of reciprocal political benefits. He considered that a speedier and surer means might be brought into play—the all-prevailing influence of woman—the power which gentleness and loveliness often asserts over the passions of men.

Philip of Burgundy had two fair sisters, to whom he was much attached. The eldest, Margaret, was the widow of the first Dauphin Louis, son of the late Charles VI., who died young and childless. The second, Anne, was still unmarried; though, for her rank, beauty, and accomplishments, she had been sought by many nobles and princes. Bedford fixed upon Anne for himself. He knew that Arthur Earl of Richmond, younger brother of the Duke of Brittany, and lately returned from durance in England, looked with hope to win the hand of the fair widow, Margaret; and he feared that he was well disposed towards Charles, though he had not yet joined him by way of arms. What so likely to gain him over to the Regent's interest, as to secure for him the favour of the Duke of Burgundy by a marriage with that Prince's sister? Bedford was far-sighted in his plans, and seldom failed. By the mediation

of Burgundy he hoped to win over the Duke of Brittany. He had satisfied himself that the last-named Prince, being displeased with the advisers of the Dauphin, was quite willing to support the Regent, though in opposition to his own people, for the Bretons detested the English. After some skilful and successful management, Bedford obtained the promise of the two Dukes to meet him at Amiens, there to hold a conference.

They kept their word, and the Regent carried his point; for, on the 17th of April 1423, they entered into a treaty to acknowledge the child Henry VI. as King of France. But Bedford was not the only plotter. Aware that there was a growing party disposed to join the royalists in favour of the native sovereign, the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany, in order to protect themselves, entered into a private engagement (to be kept a profound secret from Bedford) to be true to each other as friends and allies, let what would betide, even though one of them should become reconciled to Charles.

The Duke of Brittany brought with him to Amiens his brother Arthur, the valiant and far-famed Earl of Richmond, of whom we shall often have to speak in the course of our narrative. His life and adventures have in them so much of chivalrous romance, that a brief notice of them, derived from contemporary memoirs,[1] may be of some interest to the reader.

He was the youngest son of that celebrated Duke who

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont*, par Guillaume Gruel.

gained the Duchy of Brittany by his sword. His mother Joan was the daughter of the King of Navarre, and the parent of many children. On the death of the Duke her husband, being still beautiful, she became the second wife of the usurper Henry IV. of England, the father of the still more victorious Henry V.[1]

Her son Richmond, under the care of a good tutor, received an education beyond the age in which he lived, for he could both read and write, and was eloquent of speech. Noblemen, and even princes, were not always so accomplished. To excel in the tournament and fight bravely in the battle-field were considered the best attainments for those of gentle blood and high degree.

Richmond fought at Agincourt with a truly brave spirit, and was found in the thickest of the fight. Two warriors killed near him were attired in armour and surcoat similar to those worn by Henry V. This was a common practice, intended by thus multiplying the king to bewilder and mislead the enemy, more especially when engaged in pursuit. In that fatal field, overmatched by the greater skill and steady valour of the English, the headlong impetuosity of the French Princes, Orleans, Bourbon, and others, could not turn the fortune of the day, nor

[1] That she was as beautiful as fame declared her to be, we can in some measure judge for ourselves; for there is exquisite delicacy in the features and form of the head and bosom of Joan of Navarre, in her marble sculptured effigy in Canterbury Cathedral, which, in spite of the injuries it received in the great rebellion, is still a fine work of art. See Stothard's *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain.*

save them from becoming prisoners. Richmond, borne down by his wounds and the weight of his armour, was, after the battle, dragged from under a heap of the dead, recognised by the emblazonment of his surcoat, and carried before Henry. Rejoicing in the capture of such a leader, he sent him, together with the royal prisoners, across the seas, to have his wounds cured in the Tower of London.

His mother—then the widowed Queen of England—heard of her son's disaster. She had not seen him since he was a child in Brittany, and begged her victorious son-in-law to be allowed a meeting with his captive. Henry granted her request, but still felt suspicious, and ordered the interview to be guarded.

Richmond was conducted to the presence of his mother, who, in order to have the opportunity of first seeing him without his knowing her, caused one of her ladies, about her own age, 'and of good discretion,' to personate the Queen, whilst she stood behind with some other ladies, as if they were attendants. Richmond entered, and believing that he saw his mother in the lady who represented her, he threw himself most reverently on his knees before her; then rose and saluted her. For a time the discourse was well carried on, and the deception kept up.

At length the lady said that he must now salute the other ladies. Richmond turned to do so; when approaching the real Queen, she could no longer contain the tender emotions of a mother's heart, and exclaimed almost

hysterically, 'O my cruel son, do you not know me?' This was enough: the chord of natural affection was struck in either bosom; they fell on each other's neck, wept abundant tears, and seemed to want words to express the joy of the meeting. The Queen (says the old chronicler) then gave him a good dinner and a thousand nobles in English money, which he gave away amongst his fellow-prisoners and his guards. Both mother and son earnestly desired to be allowed a second meeting; but Henry, who probably feared that renewed interviews might lead to the freedom of his warlike prisoner, would not grant their request.

Richmond remained in captivity for two or three years. At last political reasons arose (with which we have nothing to do in these pages) that induced Henry to let him go over to his brother, the Duke of Brittany, with whom he was desirous to be on good terms, and in this way sought to preserve his friendship. Before Richmond's departure, however, the King required his parole not to serve against him. Some insurrection in the Duchy which occurred shortly after, made the Duke very glad of his brother's return; and these disturbances led to his being obliged to pass into Normandy, where, being still on parole, he was ordered to remain, and not to quit that province without Henry's leave. What might have occurred to awaken the King's suspicions we do not know, but they seem to have been causeless; for Richmond was a man of honour and a knight, and strictly kept his word. But when Henry V. died in 1422, he considered himself

released, saying that his parole was given to Henry personally, and did not bind him to his successor.

When the time came that the Duke of Brittany was to proceed to Amiens for the conference before mentioned with Burgundy and Bedford, he passed through Normandy, and took his brother with him. At Amiens was concluded the marriage treaty proposed by the Regent. Richmond was betrothed to the young widow Margaret, the sister of Philip, and soon after was wedded to her at Dijon with splendour and feasting. For the present we leave him, and go to other matters.

The Regent proceeded to Troyes in Champagne, where, with a pomp truly regal, he married the lovely Lady Anne. There he remained but a short time; when, journeying towards Paris attended by a large body of troops, on passing Pont-sur-Seine he found the place garrisoned for Charles. He paused; and as rather a curious diversion for the days of his honeymoon, attacked the town, took it by storm, and most barbarously put all the French supporters of their native King to the sword. Then he quietly passed on to the metropolis, there to partake of all the honours, feasts, and entertainments prepared for him and his bride with the utmost magnificence at the Hôtel des Tournelles.[1]

Bedford, finding his attack upon Pont-sur-Seine had awakened a fear that he would become as formidable to the country as the late King Henry, lost no time in follow-

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 35.

ing up his success, when the hearts of men were faint from fear, by laying siege to the Castle of Ossay, near Paris. It held out for Charles with great resolution, but at the end of six weeks surrender was inevitable. Bedford caused the garrison to be conducted to Paris bareheaded, with no clothing upon them except their under doublets; some with halters round their necks, others with their swords reversed in their hands, and turned towards their own breasts.

The haughty victor received them seated in the great hall of des Tournelles, with his Duchess by his side, and without a pause ordered them to be taken forthwith to the Châtelet, there to receive the punishment of death. The Duchess, moved by compassion for these brave and unfortunate men, threw herself at the Duke's feet, and pleaded so urgently for mercy on their lives, that her stern bridegroom relented, and set them free. We call attention to these circumstances more particularly, because so many writers have cast a doubt on the truth of Froissart's narrative, wherein he ascribes to Philippa of Hainault's interference the saving of the lives of the citizens of Calais, when, after the capture of that place, they were brought before her husband, Edward III., with halters round their necks.

Nothing was more common in the middle ages than to lead prisoners of war before their victors, ready equipped for the gallows. And though, we admit, Froissart often indulged his lively imagination in describing events, or in

too readily giving credence to current reports, he was the less likely to have been misled in his account of the citizens of Calais, as he was long secretary to Queen Philippa, and very likely received the account from herself. This matter is irrelevant to our subject; but the light thrown upon a disputed historical tradition by the incident detailed in our narrative, must be our apology for introducing the discussion.

It is time to return to Charles. As yet he possessed but the shadow of kingly power. Misfortune and difficulty beset his course. Those provinces which had rendered him their utmost aid, were drained both of men and money. He knew not where to turn for assistance. It is recorded by one of the chroniclers of the time, that such was his distress, that being in want of a pair of boots, the maker of them, finding he could not be paid on delivery, took them away, being unwilling to trust the royal bankrupt.

Yet his friends managed to raise troops and gain assistance for him, and probably they gave him a pair of boots. Charles had little energy in himself to maintain his rights; but he had about him some active men of spirit, who resolved to carry forward the war on the side of Champagne. They proposed to attack and recapture the strong Castle of Crevant, which the Burgundians had recently taken. This fortress, situated between Auxerre and Avallon, was of the utmost importance, as it had protected the communications of the Royalists with the north-east. A con-

siderable body of French, some mercenaries from Italy, and three thousand Scotch, under the guidance of a Stuart Darnley, set forth on the expedition.

It is proper here to observe, that before the engagement of Crevant, the English renewed their articles of alliance with the Burgundians. For this purpose they were to meet in the Church of Auxerre,—a sacred edifice being often chosen as a place in which to form political contracts. Before the parties assembled, two peremptory orders were issued by the chiefs of the contracting parties, that all who attended should, on pain of death, leave their horses half a league distant from the church; and that, in the coming strife, no prisoners should be taken till the fate of the day was decided, under pain of death both to the captor and the captive. The object of the first order was to prevent men summoned as vassals from running away; of the second, to control the thirst for plundering the fallen by the demand of unreasonable ransoms.[1]

The Duke of Burgundy, after taking Crevant, had moved into Flanders, when, sooner than was expected, the foe advanced with speed and determination. The Duke's mother well supplied his place. Without delay she called up the feudatory lords and vassals of her son, and procured from the Duke of Bedford a strong force, directed by the Earls of Salisbury and Suffolk. We need not enter into the particulars of the conflict that followed. The defeat of Charles was complete. Overwhelmed by a supe-

[1] *England and France under the House of Lancaster*, p. 255.

rior force, the ranks of the French were broken and routed. The Scotch, who fought gallantly, were the last to yield. Stuart was taken covered with wounds, and with the loss of an eye. Saintrailles and four hundred of the noblest of the French became prisoners, whilst twelve hundred men-at-arms, principally Scotch, were left dead on the fatal field.

This terrible disaster had the usual effect of a defeat on those who rely on themselves and their cause as certain to command a victory; they became disheartened. One defeat followed upon another faster even than the messengers could journey to announce them to the unfortunate Charles. That of Crevant was of ill augury indeed. The news came on the 4th of July, to cast a shadow over the gleam of joy that brightened the Court of Bourges, for on the same day the young Queen Marie of Anjou had given birth to a son—a Dauphin who lived, as Louis XI., to be King of France.

'If,' says the French historian,[1] 'they were sorrowful at Bourges, they were not more joyous at Paris.' The Duke of Bedford was inaugurating feasts and public rejoicings for the victory achieved over the French. But the citizens showed no sympathy in such displays; for they afforded no real relief to the people, whose sufferings had been brought upon them by the distracted state of the country and the perpetual strife of arms. Paris was half depopulated. Thousands of houses were empty or

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 96.

falling. The grass grew between the stones in the streets; the wolves came up by the river, and entered the city by night; and the minds of men, struck by such misery, 'fancied they saw in Paris a new Babylon about to become the resort of beasts of prey.'[1]

The historian, to whom we have often referred, mentions so curious a circumstance connected with the desolate state of the Parisians at this period, that it must be briefly noticed. Paris, that could not find heart to share in the fêtes of its English master, gave itself a diversion more in harmony with its desolation. This was the far-famed 'Danse Macabre,' or Fête of the Dance of Death.[2]

It seems that the Parisians for six or seven months, commencing at the season of Lent, amused themselves by getting up a performance in the midst of the sepulchres of the cemetery of the Innocents. This was a most lugubrious melodrama, wherein all estates of men, from the Pope with the triple crown, kings, great lords and ladies, and persons of all ranks down to the lowest beggars, entered in their turns to dance, would they or would they not, with the leader—Death—that terrible power being personified by a human skeleton. 'The ancients,' observed M. Michelet, 'who veiled or concealed with flowers all the miseries incidental to human nature, and who disguised under black wings and a robe spangled with stars the phantom of

[1] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris;* and Monstrelet, vol. v.

[2] The subject has become well known to us by Holbein's 'Dance of Death.'

death, would have been repelled by this sinister allegory as a frightful derision of humanity. But Christianity, consistently with its principles of humility, and with that anathema it has launched against the body subject to decay, affected the images of decomposition in order to show the degradation of the earthly estate, and to contrast it with the life that is superior and imperishable. What was so extraordinary in the *Danse Macabre*, was the suppression of the contrast: the religious sentiment was forgotten, and there remained only the image of the physical destruction. The morality of the piece rested on the equality of all men, not in the sight of God, but in respect to the worm of the sepulchre.'[1]

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 96.

CHAPTER III.

France on the Verge of Ruin—Charles sends to Scotland for Help—Brief Notice of James I. of Scotland—his Genius and Romantic Fortunes—Duke of Milan sends Aid to Charles—the Condottiéri—Bedford takes Ivri—Buchan Constable of France—the French jealous of the Scotch—Condottiéri disagree—great Confusion—all command—none obey—a Boy chosen Commander—Verneuil taken—Bedford challenges the Lord Douglas—the Battle—Douglas killed—Army of Charles defeated—Bedford enters Paris in Triumph—New Sources of Disturbance in England and Burgundy—Jacqueline of Bavaria—leaves her Husband, Duke of Brabant—Pope Martin V. refuses her Divorce—appeals to the rival Pope—Benedict XIII. grants it—Contests arising from Jacqueline marrying the Duke of Gloucester.

IT must be admitted that the lugubrious spectacle for which the Parisian had so great a fancy, was but too much in harmony with the sufferings throughout the land. France was brought to the verge of ruin by the quarrel of its two masters. The English showed no feeling for the natives; but there was, and is, in the French character a wonderful buoyancy to resist or rise superior to disaster. Many true French spirits once more started up with renewed energy, and many of the clergy did their best to further it. Foreigners likewise were sought after and gave their aid. The Bishop

of Rheims had been sent to Scotland by the Council of Charles, with large promises of honour and reward, to secure the assistance of that warlike country; and most readily did the nobles and their followers respond to the call to arms. By hundreds they left the rugged mountains and sterile plains of Caledonia, to seek the verdant lands, the vineyards, and more genial clime of France, with a view to build up their own fortunes by restoring a native prince to the throne of his inheritance.

The vast emigration of the Scotch alarmed the English Governments both of London and Paris; and in order, if possible, to check it, they restored to liberty the unfortunate James I., the young King of Scotland, who for more than twenty years had been detained a prisoner in England. As this Prince in after years became closely connected with Charles, by his daughter Margaret becoming the wife of Louis the Dauphin, and was one of by far the most remarkable characters in the fifteenth century, we may pause to give some brief notice of him.

It would be out of place here to refer to the long and miserable wars between England and Scotland, more than to say that James fell into the hands of the English when only thirteen years old, whilst endeavouring to escape from the designs formed against his life by his ambitious uncle, who governed his kingdom during his minority. James was held in honourable captivity; and after being immured in the Tower of London and other strongholds, was at last confined in Windsor Castle. In 1417, Henry V., for poli-

tical reasons, carried him for a time to France, and then sent him back to his old prison, where he remained till 1424, when, as we have stated, he was restored to the regal inheritance of Scotland.

By the captive's own account, his confinement was close and strict; but he was allowed competent instructors, books, musical instruments, and materials for painting—an art then in a very early stage. The young Prince turned his prison hours to golden profit. He became learned in history and languages; a poet was he also, and studied and admired the works of Gower and Chaucer. In his own poetry, his love of nature, and the warm feelings of an affectionate heart, were expressed with much simplicity and tenderness. In his poem of *The King's Quair*, he relates how he rose early in the morning, and beguiled the painful thoughts of his misfortunes by application to his books. Contemporary writers declare that the knowledge James possessed of the Scriptures, of law, and of philosophy, was most extensive; that he was a perfect master of grammar and rhetoric, and versed in the secrets of natural science.

He studied the principles of architecture, and practised both painting and music, particularly the latter, with no common skill. He played on several instruments, and excelled on the organ; but when he touched the harp, his favourite instrument, the Abbot of Inchcolm, who was his personal friend, declared 'it was with such exquisite skill that he seemed to be inspired.' James was also a great

composer of sacred and secular music. His compositions were admired in Italy; and many years after his death he was studied as the original inventor of that unmistakeable melody, known to ourselves in the peculiar modulation of Scotch airs.[1]

James wrote many poems; but the most interesting is that before mentioned, called *The King's Quair*, wherein he recounts the story of his love. It was with him a passion pure and romantic, but tinged with melancholy from his imprisonment. The poem opens by his telling how once he listened to the matins bell, and it seemed to say to him, 'Recount the story of thy love;' and straightway he resolved to overcome his hesitation and obey the injunction. He begins by lamenting his loss of liberty, and the imprisonment of his early years. But soon the sad strain is changed for one of affecting tenderness, when he relates how one morning, in 'the merry month of May,' as he was looking down from the window of his prison chamber into the garden of the Castle of fair Windsor, and listening to the love-songs of the nightingales, and wondering what the passion of love could be, for he had never yet felt it:

'And therewith kest I down myn eye ageyne
Quhare as I saw walking under the Toure,
Full secretly, new cumyn hir to pleyne,
The fairest or the freschest young floure
That ever I saw, methought, before that houre,
For quhich sodayne abate, anon astert,
The blude of all my bodie to my hert.'

[1] See Hawkins and Burney's *History of Music*, vol. i.

This lovely creature who so charmed him, he then more particularly describes in verses long and tender. He invites 'the nightengales' to warble to her their songs; but she leaves the garden, whilst he watches her steps from his window; and the melancholy into which he was plunged by her retreat, he expresses in these two natural and beautiful lines:

> 'To sene her part and folowe I na might,
> Methought the day was turnyt into night.'

But she came again the next day, and the next; and so from that prison window and that garden walk at the old Castle of Windsor, commenced the true love of James I., the amiable and accomplished King of Scotland, and the fair Lady Jane Beaufort, who, on his regaining his liberty, became his beloved wife and queen, and the mother of Margaret, the future Dauphiness of Louis.

We hope our readers will pardon this digression; but in the midst of so much hatred, fighting, and cruelty, an episode like this gives a pleasing relief.

Though James was restored to his people and his throne, it does not appear that his return had the desired effect of preventing the Scots rendering assistance to the French King. Already had Earl Douglas reached Rochelle at the head of a large body of his followers. Charles received him joyfully, and at once conferred upon him the Duchy of Touraine for life. The prisoner Stuart of Darnley (having been exchanged for an English nobleman) once more

became his ally, and was rewarded with the lordship of Aubigné and Dreux. Everything they desired was given to the Scotch, to an extent that awakened such a spirit of jealousy in the French, that some murmured and asked whether France was to be divided between the English and the Scotch.

The Council of Charles, however, were not content with having a very numerous army of the latter, but sought for other foreign auxiliaries; and the Duke of Milan sent, at their entreaty, a troop of the Condottiéri, with three famous leaders—Valperga, Rusca, and Cacchiese.[1]

The Condottiéri were a distinct body of warlike men, differing from all others in the fifteenth century. They were at once noble and mean, faithful and treacherous, independent and mercenary, sought after but feared. By birth they were Italian; and so singular a confederacy of high and low, of those who disdained all rule and those who submitted to it, was not to be found in any other part of Europe. When not employed as mercenary soldiers, they were nothing better than organized banditti, living by plunder. In the mountains they generally found their home, where they fled for security when pursued by the laws they had violated in the towns or the plains.

Many a young nobleman, either from outlawry, excommunication, or a bankrupt fortune, became a captain

[1] Monstrelet.

of Condottiéri. Some joined the ranks from a love of wild adventure and daring enterprise; others, restless and galled by the restraints of civil society; and many a one whose deeds obliged him to cast a veil over the past, and who wished to remain in obscurity, became famous in exploits that demanded a plotting head as well as a bold hand. Some few, galled by the worm that never dies, and whom no confessional could relieve from a sense of remorse, in utter despair fled to the mountain soldiers, careless about death in others or for themselves.

These men had a distinctive dress of their own. They usually wore a cloak, a black hat and feather, with little armour except the plate on the breast; and whatever might be the arms they bore, every man had a stiletto or dagger at his side: for, as occasion might require, every man would become an assassin, and like all mercenaries, who make war a trade, they were pitiless for the vanquished.

In old paintings,—such as may still be seen in the chateaux of the south and in the illuminated chroniclers,—the Condottiéri are usually depicted of a tall and commanding stature, sallow-faced, with black hair and eyes and an unmistakeable ferocity of expression; a countenance to create fear, but to show none. Such pictures are characteristic of these men,[1]—brave to the death in the field, and though capable of the most treacherous deeds, faithful to the Prince or the State they served; yet so proud, that nothing was more difficult than for their captains to

[1] See the illuminations of Froissart and Monstrelet.

agree together in moments of peril, when it became necessary to obey a common leader chosen from their bands.

These men, on their way to France, met with and seized the Burgundian Marshal Thoulongeon, one of the victors of Crevant, and gained, we are told, some advantage, probably by exacting a ransom. As they advanced, they were surprised and disappointed by finding the country in a state of desolation the most appalling; villages deserted, farms burnt and in ruins. Briers and thorns in the place of vineyards, and fields (that aforetime were rich with the yellow harvest and the fruits of the earth) uncultivated and barren: such were the memorials of this fearful strife.

Though largely reinforced, Charles seemed little benefited; and nothing decisive was effected for a whole year, except that both the English Regent and the French King had their purses so drained by the armies they maintained, that it was with the utmost difficulty they could raise money enough to keep up the heart of their men by keeping up their pay.

The Castle of Ivri was the last place in Upper Normandy that remained firm in holding out for Charles; but it was obliged at length to yield to the arms of Bedford. The supporters of Charles, however, resolved to retake it; and they collected eighteen hundred troops, under the banners of the Lords Douglas, D'Aumale, de Ponnerre, de Ventedour, and de Narbonne, together with the Italian

mercenaries. But now the jealôusy of the French nobles showed itself in a manner the most injurious. They refused to obey the orders of the Scot Buchan, upon whom Charles had conferred the high office of Constable of France. The Condottiéri also most inopportunely disagreed among themselves, and were disposed to obey no one. The confusion became dire, and no one acknowledged as leader.

Seeing that ruin would be inevitable without a head, the nobles at length chose a youth of fifteen years old to be their commander—the boy Duke of Alençon, godfather to the baby Dauphin Louis, and son of that brave Alençon who fell at Agincourt. Of course so young a general could know nothing, and the nobles had the prudence to place the Count de Narbonne by his side as a guide to tell him what to do in the field.

On the 15th of August this strange and heterogeneous army arrived before Ivri. They found the Duke of Bedford, who had outstripped them, in so strong a position that they could not assail him with a chance of success. They gave up, therefore, all thoughts of the enterprise, and at once concerted an attack upon Verneuil.

Several Scots, who could speak English, suffered their hands to be bound with cords, and their clothes and faces to be daubed with blood; and in this condition they were dragged along, as if prisoners to the French. They were conducted before Verneuil, and called out to the watch that manned the walls, 'Let the garrison know that

all is lost. The English army is destroyed, and Charles is victorious.' The governor and defenders of Verneuil must have been very cowardly and very shallow-brained; for, without examining the probability of a defeat so proclaimed, or even attempting to make conditions, they opened their gates to the French, almost without a pause, and in hurried alarm surrendered.[1]

But whilst the army of Charles was thus taking possession of the fortress, Bedford was in pursuit; and no sooner did he arrive without the walls, than he sent a herald with a message to Lord Douglas, 'that he was come to drink a cup with him, and would stay till they quaffed it together.'

Douglas returned answer, that the Duke of Bedford was welcome; that he (Douglas) had expressly come from Scotland to find him in France, as he could not do so in England; and begged him to hasten his approach.

This Bedford did, and fatally for Douglas. Both parties formed their armies for action in the plain. The battle was long and valiantly contended. Great was the spirit shown in the onset of the French and their allies, but the steadier courage and discipline of the English prevailed. Their cavalry was ranged to support the archers, whose precision, strength, and skill proved irresistible. The army of Charles was so completely defeated, that scarcely a man of arms survived the fatal day. Douglas, Buchan, D'Aumale, De Ventedour, De Narbonne, all

[1] Monstrelet.

perished; but the boy-general, Alençon, who behaved with manly bearing in the contest, was unharmed. Of the Scotch alone five thousand bit the dust, the rest became prisoners. Most of the French and Italians were slain, but there is no record of their number.

The English did not escape unscathed. Bedford's victory cost him the lives of sixteen hundred, the very flower of his men. The loss angered him; and with embittered feelings, more becoming the defeated than the victor, he ordered the body of the brave Count de Narbonne to be hanged on a gibbet, as one of the murderers of Jean-Sans-Peur. Several Norman nobles, who had espoused the cause of Charles after having sworn allegiance to the child Henry, he also caused to be executed. The citizens of Verneuil, seeing that all was lost to their new master, once more surrendered to their former one.

Bedford soon after left for Paris, which he entered in a triumph so ostentatiously splendid, that it was compared to the triumph of a Roman victor of old. His success was followed by the conquest of Maine, and the reduction of the principal fortresses in Picardy. Everywhere the English arms were victorious. Charles and his counsellors had injured their cause by placing their faith in foreign auxiliaries, to the discouragement of their own troops. They even now forbade the French, who remained undaunted by defeat, to continue the campaign; thus leaving unprotected those who were still faithful subjects on the north of the Loire.

But the Regent also committed a great error. The English, dazzled by their late victories, fancied they could at their leisure sweep off any troops still in arms around the 'King of Bourges;' and for a time they feasted and enjoyed their good fortune without the interruption of 'war's alarms.' This misconception saved from immediate ruin the cause and crown of France; and when the time came that Bedford would have resumed the contest, (before he could call up his forces and proceed to the total subjection of the realm), an obstacle arose in his own family that compelled his attention to a very different matter, in which the Duke of Burgundy, his ally, and the Duke of Brabant, were deeply involved.

The cause of these new disturbances was a lady; but to make this clearly understood, we must somewhat retrograde.

Jacqueline of Bavaria, Countess of Hainault, Holland, and Zealand, and widow of John, a son of the late Charles VI. of France, was not only a great heiress, but a most talented and beautiful woman. Unfortunately, the very merits she possessed became a bane to herself and to others, by the ill use she made of them, in bringing about the devices of her own impassioned and arbitrary will. Violent in her loves as in her hatreds, and cruel in her temper, proud to a degree that made her look with disdain both on equals and inferiors, it was a sad chance for the young Duke of Brabant, when, from political motives, his cousin the Duke of Burgundy

brought about a marriage between him and the Lady Jacqueline.

Under any circumstances the marriage would have been ill-sorted, for the wife, with such qualities as we have described, was many years the elder, and the godmother of the husband; and he, feeble in body and mind, irregular in conduct, and led by humble dependants, was altogether one of the weakest princes of his time. His imperious Duchess, feeling contempt and aversion for him, took no pains to conceal it; and soon did the conjugal infelicities of the princely pair become the talk of the Netherlands.

But Jacqueline was a bold woman, who cared nothing for public opinion. Her plans were laid with so much skill and caution that—no one suspecting her purpose—she contrived to steal away from Hainault with her priest, whom she had won over to give his help, and by way of Calais crossed the seas and got to London. This happened the year before the death of Henry v. That Prince, knowing the value of an ally who held such large continental possessions, received Jacqueline with much courtesy, and heard her story of dissatisfaction. She wanted to be rid of her husband. But nothing could be done without the Pope. So to Martin v., therefore, Jacqueline sent her priest, to represent to his Holiness how much she was afflicted by being the wife of her godson, and how much her conscience desired to be relieved by a divorce. Now Pope Martin was by no means disposed

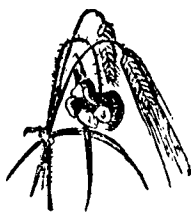
to admit her plea. But there was a schism in the Church at this time,—another Pope living in the mountains of Aragon; and whilst Pope Martin was excommunicating Benedict XIII., Benedict returned the compliment by excommunicating his rival at Rome. To Benedict, therefore, the lady applied, and he at once granted her desire for a divorce, in return for which she declared him to be the true and infallible Pope.

Whilst at the Court of London, she became acquainted with the Duke of Gloucester, brother to Henry V. He was handsome, spirited, and ambitious, and not at all averse to respond to the favour with which the Lady Jacqueline distinguished him, though more charmed with her wealth than with her personal merits.

Gloucester married her without consulting Henry, whose anxiety to retain the friendship of the Duke of Burgundy would have made him condemn the match. Burgundy declared he would, by an appeal to Pope Martin, procure for Jacqueline a second divorce. Gloucester, however, had no mind to lose the lady and her lands, and threatened to maintain his right with the sword, and, in opposition to Bedford's advice, actually declared hostilities.

To add to Bedford's vexation, the struggles between Gloucester and Cardinal Beaufort to grasp supreme power had thrown the kingdom of England into such confusion, that, in the hope to prevent a civil war, the Regent was compelled for a time to leave France for his native country. The state of disorganization and the violence

of parties had grown to such a head, that the child King, Henry VI., was often carried dreadfully frightened to the House of Parliament and seated on the throne, in the hope that his presence would lull the storm and produce unity and peace. This state of affairs would not allow Bedford, the only man of any great ability and judgment then in power, to return to the Continent till the spring of the following year.



CHAPTER IV.

Bedford fears Burgundy will make Peace with Charles—Charles indulges in Indolence and Pleasures at Bourges—Yolande, Dowager-Duchess of Anjou, goes into Brittany—Dangers of her Journey—wins Richmond for the Service of Charles—Richmond Constable of France—Tannegue, Violence and Generosity of his Character—Louvet an evil Counsellor—Bishop Clermont dismissed—Court removes to Saumur—the Constable and Trémoille seize Giac—his Confession—Giac put to Death—De Camus the new Favourite—Charles's Prodigality—his Courtiers—the Army left without Pay or Food—Bedford resumes Hostilities—De Camus assassinated—La Tremoille the new Favourite—The Constable attempts to save Montargis—La Hire—his eccentric Character—his Reproof to Charles—Montargis rescued—Charles and his Favourite—Richmond banished—Bedford attempts to seize Church Property—France in the deepest Distress.

ON his return, Bedford feared, and not without reason, that Burgundy would make up matters with Charles VII., and restore him in safety to the throne. There was the more cause to fear this, as the Duke of Savoy (who had just brought about a marriage between the youngest sister of Burgundy and the Count de Clermont) had sent the Archbishop of Rheims to propose terms of peace. Burgundy replied that he could accept none whilst Charles kept about him

for counsellors those who had murdered his father, Jean-Sans-Peur.

This was an obstacle of the most serious kind; but Charles, who throughout his whole life was indebted to women for the most serious services, now in this momentous crisis of his affairs experienced how much could be done for him by a woman of sense and spirit. Instead of straining every nerve to take advantage of the dissensions among the English, to rouse up his friends, and make a vigorous effort to recover his kingdom, Charles was amusing himself at his little Court of Bourges with idle pleasures and indolent ease in the society of his favourites, and was seemingly content to let things run their own course.

But at this time there was with him his wife's widowed mother, Yolande, Dowager-Duchess of Anjou and Queen of Sicily, who, with a view to gain for him that energetic assistance he so much needed, set off in company with the Bishop of Clermont on an expedition to Brittany. The journey was long, and, except in the towns, not without danger. The people spoke a foreign language (akin to the Welsh, for both were descended from the Celts), and the country in many parts was wild and scarcely civilised; the peasantry often lived in huts with the goats they reared, and whose skins the men wore for their jackets, feeding mostly on chestnuts gathered from their vast forests. Such was Brittany, a country not altogether desirable for the journey of an elderly Princess

accustomed to the attendance and luxury of a Court. Anxious to escape observation till her mission was accomplished, she travelled with no more of her people than was absolutely necessary, and relied for protection far more on the saintly presence of the venerable Bishop than on her small military escort.

This remarkable woman (of whom we shall have to say more anon) knew the history of Arthur Earl of Richmond, brother to the Duke of Brittany. She knew that his mother had been the second wife of Henry IV.; that he had fought gallantly at Agincourt, was there made prisoner, and had since reconciled himself to the English and to the Regent; and, it was reported, had been offended by that Regent refusing to confide to his command the army of England, and in his angry mood had spoken favourably of a French king for a French people.

The Scotch Constable Buchan was dead, and Yolande's scheme—a bold one certainly—was to fill his place by Arthur Earl of Richmond; and by his means, if possible, to win over his brother, the Duke of Brittany, for Charles and his cause. A woman of talent and energy is seldom turned aside from her purpose; and though the Duchess had been warned that her plan would prove abortive, she persevered. Her rank, age, and deportment entitled her to respect, and she was received with all honour at the Court of Brittany. To her natural abilities she added the grace of a captivating manner; and knowing that Rich-

mond coveted a high command, she so dexterously 'played before his eyes the sword of the Constable of France,' that he became dazzled, and eager to grasp it. Yet, aware that to do so he must in all probability offend Burgundy, he refused to accept it without the consent of his brother the Duke of Brittany, and his brother-in-law the Duke of Burgundy. This the latter would not give until Charles promised to discard all those about him who had taken part in the murder of his father. Charles agreed; but when the Duke of Brittany was required to give his consent, he placed so little confidence in Charles, that he insisted on four cautionary towns, besides hostages, being given to ensure the safety of his brother. This also was granted, and Chinon was named as one of the places.

The Dowager-Duchess, delighted with her success, saw with exultation Richmond, nobly attended by the greatest barons of Brittany, set out for Chinon, where, in the garden of the fine old castle, and with all solemn and due ceremony, on the 7th March 1426, Richmond received from the hand of Charles the sword of Constable of France, and on his knees swore fealty and did homage to him as King of France.[1]

Tannegui Dechastel was one of the proscribed on account of the murder of Jean-Sans-Peur. He was a man of ability, but of a passionate, violent nature; and to such a degree, that on some occasion, having quarrelled with a nobleman at the Council table, he drew his

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont*, p. 251.

poignard and stabbed him in the presence of the King. What a picture does it present to us of the state of society, and the want of authority to enforce the laws, when we find an act so barbarous perpetrated in the presence of the Sovereign, and no punishment inflicted on the perpetrator!

But this Tannegui, ferocious as he was, had some of those merits that are not unfrequently found in persons of violent temper: he could be generous. On hearing the Duke of Burgundy's terms,—in which he insisted on the dismissal of the murderers of his father,—Tannegui suddenly appeared before Charles, and said that he would not remain as an obstacle to a thing so desirable as a peace; therefore he resigned his office, and would withdraw from the Court. Some others expressed their willingness to do the same. But Louvet, the President, or principal law officer, refused to disrobe, and cared little for the ruin that threatened the kingdom, so long as he could grasp and retain power.

The new Constable departed for Brittany, there to raise troops as stout, brave, and stubborn as himself. Louvet, plausible and artful, taking advantage of his royal master's weakness, and the absence of any other adviser whose counsels would be observed, persuaded Charles to break his engagement to Burgundy; and the indolent Prince, always irresolute and easily led, followed his counsel.

The Constable, with 'a head of iron,' great resolution, and an austere temper, was never turned aside from his

purpose by difficulty, friend or foe. His exertions for the good cause had been energetic and successful; and immediately after he hastened back to the Court, then at Angers. The first person he met before he entered the castle was the Bishop of Clermont, just dismissed from the presence of the King because he had ventured to remind him that he ought to keep the promise made to the Duke of Burgundy, and send away the obnoxious persons.[1] The Constable heard with indignation the cause of the Bishop's dismissal. He was a rough but a true friend; and caring little for the ceremonious respect due to royalty, when royalty was given to promise-breaking and folly, he determined to compel Charles to act wisely in spite of himself. He directed some persons on whom he could depend for support to follow him to the presence of the King. They instinctively obeyed, for Richmond was a man whose every look and word had in it authority. Without formal announcement he led them before Charles, and then, in a tone of haughty determination, told his royal master that both himself and the gentlemen who came with him were resolved to see dismissed from his service Louvet and all those whom he had consented to discard from his counsel. This firmness prevailed, and they were dismissed.

Soon after, the Court removed to Saumur, where, in consequence of the interference and influence of the Constable, the Duke of Brittany came in person to do

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont;* Henri Martin.

homage to Charles for his Duchy, and placed at his disposal an army of sturdy Bretons. Great were the rejoicings for these events, for they gave hope of a return to peace and prosperity. The royal personages were lodged in the Abbey of St. Florent, where the usually silent and solemn cloisters resounded with the songs of minstrels and the shouts of joy. All was gladness. But this promising state of things was soon overclouded by Charles's own folly. Always a prey to any one who by artifice and flattery knew how to comply with his humour, to supply the loss of Louvet he chose for a new favourite Pierre de Giac.[1]

It was commonly said of Charles that he 'loved by the eye,' forgetting those he liked best, and who had best served him, when they were out of sight. This was the case in his conduct towards the Constable, who was once more absent, endeavouring to conclude a peace between Charles and Burgundy.

Giac, fearing that if this should take place he should lose both his new appointment and the King's favour (as the Duke knew well he had connived at the murder of Jean-Sans-Peur), stirred up some of those courtiers to whom Richmond had given offence by his blunt manners, to join with him in rendering Charles suspicious and jealous of the most able and disinterested man in the State. Richmond, on his return, was not slow to detect the change in his master towards him, and to learn the

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont.*

cause. He determined on a signal vengeance. Giac, he knew, had a mortal enemy in the Lord de la Tremoille, who gladly promised to aid the Constable's purpose of revenge.

On the night of the 24th of January 1427, accompanied by a guard of archers, these nobles forced their way into Giac's costly hotel. Awakened by the noise, he inquired what occasioned it. On being told, he exclaimed, 'Then am I a dead man!' He was not mistaken. By order of the Constable he was seized in his bed, and with nothing on but his shirt, placed on a horse and conducted to a fortress in the neighbourhood, where he was subjected to what in those dreadful times was considered a legal process—although he was condemned beforehand. Death was the sentence awarded. Before his execution, the wretched man made such a confession of iniquities as (says the chronicler) 'it was wonderful to hear.' He acknowledged to having compelled his first wife, when near the time of her confinement, to swallow poison; after which he placed her on a horse, conducted her to a lone castle, and left her there to die. He confessed also to deeds of sorcery, and to having made a compact and shaken hands with the devil, to gain his wicked ends.[1] This was considered the greatest of his crimes; for sorcery was frequently mingled with blasphemy, and was especially the case in the ceremonies observed by the makers of wax images.

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont*, p. 262; *Mémoires de la Pucelle d'Orleans.*

Thus, if an enemy wished to destroy another man or woman, he caused a little image of the individual to be made in wax, which was subjected to a slow fire; and as it melted away, so did the hated person waste and die. But this could not take effect unless a priest in holy orders had baptized the waxen figure, with godfather and godmother present, as at the baptism of an infant. No respectable priest would of course so profane the sacred rite; but there was no want, when well paid, of bad ones, with appropriate wicked sponsors, to do all in secrecy.[1]

Giac confessed to sorcery of the worst description; but possibly he had a higher opinion of the power of money than of the black art, for he offered to pay Richmond, as ransom, a hundred thousand crowns in gold to spare his life, and to give up his wife and children as hostages for the payment. The Constable was inexorable. Finding he could not prevail with man, in the hope to appease Heaven, Giac then begged that the hand with which he had shaken that of the devil might be struck off before he was drowned. We are not told if this favour was granted; but the drowning was speedily accomplished. 'Do not ask' (says the chronicler) 'whether the King was very angry.' But when told by those about him how evil had been the course of Giac's life, he was '*tres content.*' This, observes

[1] For a most curious instance of the baptism of a waxen image in the fourteenth century, see Mr. William Longman's *Life of Edward the Third*, vol. i. p. 104.

Henri Martin, is a trait of admirable '*naïveté*,' for the absent or the dead were easily judged to be of no worth in the mind of Charles.

But now that Giac was gone, Charles could not be left without some one to amuse him, to govern his household, to direct his pastimes, to save him the trouble of ordering, and even of thinking. Queen Yoland knew this well, and consulted with the Constable what was best to be done for him. They arranged to place about his person an agreeable gentleman of small pretensions, a Monsieur de Camus, as they considered he was incapable of meddling in political affairs. But Monsieur de Camus had a more advantageous opinion of himself. In a short time he led his master just as easily, and into as many evil ways, as any one of his predecessors. All went wrong. The public finances, wrung from the miseries of the people, were squandered on banquets, ladies, and courtiers. The army were unpaid, and wanted both clothes and food. Richmond was driven to his wits' end to know how to keep the men together. He sacrificed his own property; yet all he did was so thwarted, that every chance of saving France seemed as if it would be lost for want of proper means to act at the auspicious moment. It was time to stir; for Bedford was once more at the head of a powerful army, and preparing to take the field. Warwick, the king-maker, was his Lieutenant-General. The Duke of Brittany had become cold; and the hope of peace with Burgundy was at an end. The war commenced. Charles lost towns and castles; and

still gave himself up to folly, and the evil counsels of De Camus. The Constable seeing this, and that all was hastening to ruin, resolved to make an effort to save both king and kingdom. It must be confessed that the Constable was unscrupulous in carrying out his purpose. He contrived a snare for De Camus, who, supposing he was about to fulfil an assignation with a lady, fell into the hands of his own servants, by whom he was slain.

Soon after, Richmond had to lead his troops on a service of great importance; but before his departure, knowing that Charles could not live without a favourite, he gave him one upon whom he thought he could rely. It was the Lord de la Tremoille, who had helped to seize Giac. Charles objected; but Richmond assured him that La Tremoille was a chivalrous gentleman of rank and wealth, who would serve him well and agreeably.

'Fair cousin,' replied the King, 'you give him to me, but you will repent it; for I know him better than you do.' Yet such was the easy weakness of Charles, that although he accepted La Tremoille with almost aversion, he gave himself up to his guidance as readily as he did to that of his former favourites. That the opinion which Charles expressed of the man was the true one, the Constable soon found to his cost; for he proved in the end to be the most subtle, scheming enemy that Richmond had ever encountered; and deeply he repented having placed him about the King.

The Constable departed. His object was to save Montargis, then closely beleaguered by the English. He had assembled a choice body of men on the Loire, and placed in command John the Bastard of Orleans, afterwards so famous as the Count Dunois. He employed also Stephen Vignobles, and that strange Gascon commonly called La Hire, who was alike brave and eccentric. So eager was the Gascon to rush to the front in this expedition, that he would not allow himself time to go in search of a priest to help to clear his conscience before the battle. But chancing to meet one, he begged the good man to give him, as quick as possible, absolution. 'First make thy confession; first let us hear thee tell about thy sins.' La Hire assured him there was no time for it, and that he asked no more than was usual before going in a hurry into battle.

The priest still demurred. So La Hire put his hands together and said: 'My Lord of heaven, be so good as to do for La Hire as much as you would have La Hire do for you if you were La Hire!' Feeling satisfied that he had offered up a comprehensive prayer that would make all clear with his conscience, he persuaded the priest to absolve him. Another anecdote recorded of the man shows that his sincerity was of a better order than his theology. Before starting for this war he went to pay his duty to the King. He found him engaged in preparations for a brilliant fête; and Charles asked La Hire what he thought of them. 'I think,' replied the uncourtly

soldier, 'that there never before was a king who lost his kingdom so merrily.'[1] He then departed for the wars.

Orleans, La Hire, and all the other captains did their devoirs with skill and spirit, and rescued Montargis from the grasp of the English.[2] But this was an isolated success; all again went wrong. We will not venture into the labyrinth of details. Charles and his favourite marred everything undertaken for the royal cause; and so much had La Tremoille gained the ascendency, that he not only filled the mind of his master with the most unjustifiable suspicions of the Constable, but induced him to banish Richmond altogether from his presence, and not to suffer him to come even near the court.

It is only by referring to contemporary writers that anything like a picture of the miserable state of France at this period can be obtained. The social edifice seemed as if shaken to the very foundation, and ready to topple down. Laws, religious, moral, or politic, were treated with contempt unless upheld by the sword. 'All those signs,' says Henri Martin, 'which are the *avant couriers* of the death of nations, seemed to announce that the end of France was at hand. The monarchy, exhausted by years of madness, seemed incapable even of dying with glory.' The most worthy of the nobility were either dead or in captivity; and those who remained were suffering 'defeat after defeat, in many instances the consequence of their own caprice, pride, and oppression.' Many

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle d'Orleans*, p. 59. [2] Monstrelet.

had fallen into a state of discouragement, fatal alike to themselves and their country. The clergy had been oppressors, and now they were the oppressed. They had been robbed and spoiled by the foreigner; and that with so little respect for the sacredness of their order, that the Duke of Bedford and his Council attempted to seize for the exchequer of the child King Henry all the revenues that had been given to the Gallican Church for the last half century. But though he obtained large sums, this wholesale spoliation was cut short by the obstacles thrown in his way, and the determined resistance of the University of Paris.[1]

Bedford's troops had begun to plunder even on the highway, and others were not slow to follow their example; whilst assassination, and sudden stabbing in moments of passion, were crimes of daily occurrence, more especially in Paris. The most worthy among the clergy (and there were many truly pious and charitable) preached and refused absolution to the dissolute; but their influence was gone with the generality of the people. The poor looked to the clergy in vain for help, for they had little wherewith to help themselves. More than once the King had appealed to them for assistance, but they could afford him nothing but their prayers.

The citizens, oppressed in turn by the rival kings and their partisans, harassed by wars in which they found no result but in imposts on their property and the ruin of

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 233.

their industry, lost much of their patriotism, and began to think of their individual safety, and to care little for that of their country. But the greatest of all the sufferers were the women and the poor. The former during these horrible wars had been fearfully treated,—made to do the work of men, and to toil worse than the slaves in the galleys. Even the harmless and devout inmates of the convents had not been spared in the hour of victory; they had suffered all that the unbridled licence of men could effect, 'in whom was combined the fierceness of the tiger and the spirit of the demon.' The poor peasantry died by hundreds from want, pestilence, and famine.

What a state was this for a nation! Again to quote a modern French writer, when speaking of his country at this period: 'The mission of a great people that had nurtured chivalry in its infant state; had followed the cross to the crusades; had cherished poetry,—the rising arts, and the civilisation of the Christian world, was that now to be abandoned, or to pass to another people? Was the mission of France at an end amongst the nations? England had proclaimed it was, and Europe began to credit the assertion.'[1]

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 423.

CHAPTER V.

Bedford bent on the Conquest of France—Salisbury sent to the English Troops—Orleans to be subdued—Siege to be commenced—Advance of the English to the Loire—Help sent to Charles from Poitiers and Rochelle—Jealousy of Richmond—Siege commenced—The Forts called Bastilles, the Tournelles—State of the beleaguered City—Salisbury killed—Succeeded by Suffolk—Severity of the Winter—Exchange of Courtesies—The famous John Talbot sent to assist the Siege—Summons Orleans to surrender—Clermont and Falstoffe—The Battle called the Herrings—Dissatisfaction in Orleans—The Citizens appeal to the Duke of Burgundy—Sir William Gladsdale in command for the English Host—Orleans shows great Spirit—A Fierce Engagement—Orleanists retire within their Walls—Charles's Affairs desperate—Proposes to retire to Dauphiné or Scotland—Lull in the Storm of War before Orleans.

IN 1428 everything was still against France. Pope Martin v. having declared the marriage of Jacqueline with the Duke of Gloucester void, and the Duke of Brabant her rightful husband, the cause of anger between Burgundy and England ceased, and once more they became allies. This matter being settled, Bedford resumed a purpose which, though interrupted, he had never renounced,—that of conquering for Henry all the realm of France. At his solicitation the Earl of Salisbury came over seas

with six thousand troops. A great levée was also enforced, amounting on the whole to no less than ten thousand men,—a formidable army for the days of which we write.

The Regent's plan was to possess himself of the course of the Loire, afterwards to invade the provinces of the South; so driving Charles that he must seek refuge amongst its desolate mountains and scattered towns.

The report of the vast preparations made by Bedford to carry out this plan spread far and wide, and even reached, within prison walls, that gallant Duke of Orleans who, since his fall at Agincourt, had mourned in the Tower of London more than fifteen years' captivity. In vain had he offered an enormous ransom; but the aggressive and ungenerous spirit of Henry V., wishing if possible to be rid of all the princes of the blood royal, so that none might be in the way of his infant son's pretensions to the Crown of France, had induced him, even on his death-bed, to advise that Orleans should be held perpetually a prisoner. Like James the Scottish King, Orleans had consoled his lonely hours by throwing his thoughts into poetry, with a delicacy of feeling and expression not unworthy the literature of a more refined age.

On hearing that Salisbury was about to depart and leading a strong force to carry on the war, with the privilege which chivalry gave to knights of soliciting favours of one another, even when enemies, on occasions of moment,

Orleans begged him, as far as he might be able, to spare his towns and estates. Orleans, the chief of the central cities, and that from which he took his title, was the key of the South of France. With its stupendous walls and towers, its ancient cathedral, and dense population, it was altogether a noble city; and the English were determined to possess it. Salisbury, with a chivalrous feeling akin to that in which the request had been made, assured the captive Prince, that as far as he had power the city should be spared, but he could not answer for the other leaders of the army.

Of such great importance would be the failure to conquer Orleans, that Bedford paused before he gave the signal to commence the investment of the place. At length Salisbury received his commands to proceed. Every obstacle was removed that could interrupt the siege, and on the 12th of October 1428 the English army in full force were encamped before Orleans.

They found the place prepared for the occasion. It was as the last bulwark of the monarchy of France. The chief citizens vied with each other in a noble emulation who should do the most, make the greatest sacrifices, or show the most courage to save their ancient city from falling before the sword of the invader. Clergy, laity, women,—all had but one feeling and one purpose, to die, if needful, but not to surrender. A tax from which no one should be exempted was levied. The rich gave towards it with an abundant hand; even the poorest were eager

to give their mite; and though citizens in general hate men-at-arms within their walls, those of Orleans gladly welcomed the archer, and, above all, the cannoneer to manage the cannon,—a very clumsy and inefficient construction of the period,—to repel from their walls the foreign foe.[1]

The victors of Montargis, the Bastard Dunois, La Hire, the Lord de Gaucourt the ancient defender of Harfleur, only lately ransomed from captivity, with other gallant men, were within the walls. Gaucourt was present in a civil and military capacity, for he commanded the city both as Bailiff and as Lieutenant of the imprisoned Duke of Orleans. It was found that the faubourg Le Portereau, in which were some fine churches and houses, could not be defended; it was therefore razed to the ground, and the beautiful gardens and grounds destroyed. Every one toiled for the general good. The clergy were earnest in their duties, and caused many processions to be made in order to obtain God's pardon for the sins and disorders attendant on the calamity of war.

The advance of the English towards the Loire stirred with profound emotion every bosom true to the succession of the native-born monarch throughout the land. Every one felt that the crisis was come, that the destiny of Charles stood with the walls of Orleans. Every province, every town still free from the English yoke, sent what they could

[1] 'This is among the first sieges in Europe where cannon were found to be of importance.'—Hume, vol. iii. p. 139.

command. Bourges forwarded ample stores of corn, wine, and the munitions of war. Poitiers and La Rochelle sent money, with a 'God speed him,' to the King.[1]

But how did Charles receive these proofs of loyalty to his person and veneration for the throne? Very coldly. They roused him but little from his life of pleasure and indolent ease, and they did nothing towards inducing him to rise with the vigour of a man and the authority of a ruler, to silence the paltry and miserable jealousies and discords in the Council or the Court. Such was the influence of La Tremoille over the weak King, that he prevented him from recalling the most able adviser and General of his realm, the banished Constable. 'He would rather have delivered his master up to the English than to Richmond.'[2]

His extreme peril did, however, at length cause Charles to summon a convention of the Estates-General at Chinon, where, for the first time, the representatives of Languedoc and Dauphiné appeared with the deputies from the other provinces. But the sum they voted was so small, that it showed an almost incredible indifference, both to the imminent danger of the time and to the necessities of the King. He was obliged once more to have recourse to his old friends the Scots; and amongst other benefits held out to win their assistance, offered to contract a marriage between the Dauphin and the little Princess Margaret, daughter of James their King.

[1] Monstrelet. *Histoire de France.*
[2] Henri Martin. *Mémoirs de Richemont.*

The siege of Orleans commenced. The eyes of all were fixed on that city. Was France to remain under its native Prince, or to become the spoil of an English pretender? The Orleanists made a sortie, repulsed the foe in their advance with unflinching valour, and burnt another portion of their own suburbs, which they had no other way to prevent affording shelter to the enemy. That enemy was indefatigable in erecting bastions, making trenches, and raising batteries; and the cannon (though so inferior to that of modern times, when the resources of science have been drained to invent the most effective means for man to destroy man) was powerful enough to make fearful havoc with the walls of Orleans and their brave defenders.

On the 21st of October, the English made an assault on the boulevard at the end of the bridge. They were received with a determined spirit of resistance by the regular troops and the armed citizens. Even the women advanced with intrepid courage in the face of a shower of arrows and other deadly missiles. They brought 'refreshment, wine, vinegar, and water,' to their defenders; wiped the sweat from the brows of fathers, husbands, sons, friends; stanched the blood that flowed from their wounds; and whilst engaged in these holy offices of love and humanity, often fell by the side of the objects of their care. Such was the true heroism of these wives and daughters of Orleans.

After an obstinate resistance and great loss of life, the Orleanists were dislodged, but not beaten. They withdrew

over the bridge and made a stand in the towers which, one on either side, defended the passage. Mindful of the safety of the citizens, they broke down an arch in their rear, but still could hold communication by planks placed across the gap, which might be removed in a moment when necessary. But vain were those measures of security.

On the morrow Sir William Gladsdale, observing that the waters of the river were unusually low, led the way, and followed by several hardy men, waded through the stream, ascended, and took the towers by storm. He then raised a bulwark to connect the captured towers. This formidable work he called the Bastille des Tournelles; and there he planted his artillery, in full command of the doomed city.[1]

Day after day, night after night, the siege went on. The cannonade was compared by the chroniclers of the time, for sound and effect, to 'the anger of God when He thundered in the heavens.' The cross-bow men and the English archers aimed with terrible certainty,—death was in every shaft. The besieged responded with no less resolution. On both sides the carnage was fearful; all felt the peril, no one could claim a victory. So obstinate a resistance caused Salisbury to see the necessity of drawing a closer circle of forts round the city; so that if the plan he had in view, of battering the walls and taking the place by storm, failed, the siege might be turned into a blockade. On the morning of the 27th of October, Salisbury ascended

[1] *Mémoirs de Richemont; Mémoirs de la Pucelle; Histoire de France.*

the Bastille des Tournelles with Gladsdale, in order that, while discussing this plan, they might the better observe the position of the English army, and the extent of the ramparts of the besieged. As he stood there, Gladsdale said, 'Look, sir, from this point at *your* city; you will see it quite plain.' While he yet spoke, there came rushing through the air 'a stone bullet,' shot from a cannon on the city walls; it struck the side of the window through which Salisbury was looking out; he instantly threw himself back, but the pieces of stone from the shattered window struck him with such violence, that he fell covered with blood at the foot of Gladsdale, and upon the body of one of his captains, who had been killed by a blow on the head from the stone fragments.[1]

> 'Speak, Salisbury; at least, if thou canst speak,
> How far'st thou, mirror of all martial men?
> One of thy eyes, and thy cheek's side struck off:
> Accursed tower! accursed fatal hand!'

The English leaders, fearing that, if known, the danger of the Commander would cause disorder, did their best to conceal the state into which he was thrown by his wounds. He was therefore removed in secret to Meung, where he died on the 3d of November—recommending the captains who were about him to continue the siege at any cost till Orleans was captured.[2]

[1] *Mémoirs de Richemont; Mémoirs de la Pucelle.*

[2] Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 237; De Florent d'Illiers, p. 199; *Histoire de Charles VII.*, par Chartien, p. 17.

The Earl of Suffolk, who succeeded to the command, endeavoured with the utmost vigour to carry out the plans of the deceased; and by his exertions the army soon numbered more than twenty thousand men. In order to complete a circle of blockade and starve out the city, Suffolk caused a vast number of small forts to be erected without delay. But the work must in the winter months have gone slowly on, for the spaces between them were so wide apart, that Dunois, with some other daring men, watched their opportunity, and repeatedly managed to get out of and into the city, and bring back with them such supplies and small bodies of men, that before the close of the year the garrison numbered twelve thousand, including many of the young and bravest of the French nobles. The winter set in with severity, and there was a lull in the storm of war, for both parties seemed glad of a respite. It is impossible to read without a smile the pleasant courtesy of 'Maistre Jehan,' the French cannoneer, towards the enemy; for, thinking it must be very dull with the English in their towers and forts, he sent them some violins for their amusement during the long and dreary winter evenings. There certainly is a wonderful buoyancy in the French character, never without cheerfulness, that spring of hope.

At the commencement of the new year they probably thought the English had enjoyed fiddling enough, so they began to trouble them anew with sudden and daring sorties, though a very formidable General had been sent

by Bedford to encounter them. He summoned the town to surrender—

'English John Talbot, Captains, calls you forth,
Servant-in-arms to Harry King of England,
And thus he would—open your city gates,
Be humble to us, call my Sovereign yours,
And do him homage as obedient subjects,
And I'll withdraw me and my bloody power;
But if you frown upon this proffer'd peace,
You tempt the fury of my three attendants—
Lean famine, quartering steel, and climbing fire,
Who, in a moment, even with the earth,
Shall lay your stately and air-braving towers.'

Talbot was treated by the brave Orleanists but 'as the ominous and fearful owl of death.' They answered him with defiance, saying, not a stone of their walls would they yield. The siege had now become a blockade; and the inhabitants soon became so pressed, that they contrived to send a deputation to the King, who, in reply, informed them that the Count de Clermont, with a reinforcement of troops, led by many of the noblesse of the Bourbonnais, Auvergne, and Berri, was about to march to their aid, and compel the English to raise the siege. Most welcome was such news; and Dunois contrived to escape, eluded the forts, and went to urge that the promised aid might come without delay.

Clermont prepared to do so, when he learnt that the Duke of Bedford, anxious for the welfare of the souls of his people, and that they should not be injured by any unorthodox indulgence, was about to send forward many

waggons heavily laden with salt fish, for the use of the army during Lent. Clermont at once resolved to intercept the convoy and carry off the stores. But the convoy proved too strong for him. It consisted of no less than 1700 men, under the command of Sir John Falstoffe, one of Suffolk's valiant captains. Seeing the approach of Clermont, Falstoffe drew some of his men behind his waggons, sustained the assault with great courage, and put the ranks of the enemy into disorder. Then calling forth the rest of his force, he fell upon the French, and their defeat was complete. This encounter was styled in derision 'the battle of the herrings,' but it proved no laughing matter for the French cause.

Dissatisfaction and discord reigned in Orleans. The inhabitants had been led to expect those who would aid them, but they had come to them defeated. Like most disappointed people, the Orleanists were in no good humour, and unjustly reproached Clermont with inaction; and although he attempted to raise men and retrieve the late disaster, it proved in vain, for most of his followers deserted him. The citizens ceased to hope for any effectual aid from the King. Their necessities daily increasing, they called a council; but though seeing that death or surrender must soon be their alternative, they could not consent 'to become English.' If they must bear a foreign yoke, they deemed it better to submit to one of a continental prince; and as submission to the Duke of Burgundy would least arouse the jealousy of the English, they agreed to send the

Lord de Saintrailles and a deputation, with an offer to that Prince, to place their city in sequestration in his hands, on condition that he would use his influence with the Duke of Bedford to obtain for them a reprieve from war.

Weeks elapsed, and the deputies did not return. The besiegers renewed their efforts with redoubled vigour, whilst those of the besieged became far less effective; yet they still held out, and with such pertinacity that Sir William Gladsdale, then in command, became exasperated, and vowed that whenever he entered the city he would put every one to the sword, without sparing sex or age.[1]

As might have been expected, although the Duke of Burgundy was willing to accept the offer made by the citizens, and came to Paris to confer on the subject with the Duke of Bedford, neither the latter nor his Council would agree to the proposed terms. Bedford thought he had done enough for Burgundy in allowing him to possess himself of nearly the whole of the Netherlands, and took it ill that a Burgundian Prince should think of meddling with what he called 'Henry's towns' in the centre of France. 'I shall have Orleans according to my own terms,' said Bedford haughtily, forgetting his usual prudence in his passion; 'and will make the citizens pay me for the cost of the siege. I should make a poor affair of it to beat the bush and have another take the birds.' The Duke of Burgundy quitted Paris so dissatisfied, that though he did not come to an open breach

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

with the Regent, he withdrew his own men who had hitherto been serving with the English.

On the return of the deputies, the Orleanists, seeing their last hope gone, called up that spirit in themselves which despair often makes so formidable, and on the very day of their disappointment made so resolute a sortie that it was plain they were determined to compel victory or to find death. Their onset was so sustained and intrepid, that at length the English were obliged to bring nearly all their force to bear upon them, and, after a fearful slaughter, once more drove the brave Orleanists within their walls. The besiegers looked on this sortie as the supreme effort of despair. Certain that the city would soon be in their hands, they arranged the plan of their future operations and the final expulsion of 'the King of Bourges,' as they still called Charles in contempt. The conquest would, they said, be followed by the submission of Touraine, Berri, Poitou, and all would soon be won for Henry VI.

Most true was it that the affairs of Charles were in a desperate state. The greater part of the older nobility had abandoned his cause, and retired to their estates, there to await the moment when they might best make terms with the English victor. Charles was at Chinon, isolated, amazed, paralyzed by his ill fortune, with no resources, no money in his coffers, no one from whom to borrow,—for none of his friends had anything to lend. Even the small number of men-at-arms who had been

true to him were ready to disperse. In this extremity the few friends left advised him to quit Touraine, and to retire into the mountains of Auvergne or Dauphiné, if those provinces were not overrun by the victor.[1]

The inert Charles went even beyond his advisers in despondency. He reproached himself for the prolongation of the war, and the consequent misery of his people; doubted if he might be the true heir to the throne; considered himself as under the curse of God; and talked of giving up all claim to the crown, and hastening to seek an asylum, if it pleased Heaven to spare him life and liberty, in Scotland or Spain.[2]

Whilst he was thus deliberating, there was another lull in the efforts of the besiegers before Orleans; only, however, like the lull of the elemental storm, to burst with greater violence when the strife should be renewed. We will, however, take advantage of it to bring before our readers one in whom will soon be found the all-absorbing interest of our story.

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi. [2] Henri Martin, vol. vi.

CHAPTER VI.

BIRTH OF JOAN OF ARC.

Religious Fanatics—Marie of Avignon—her Prophecy—that of Merlin—Duchy of Lorraine—Town of Vaucouleurs—Village of Domremi—Oak Wood, the Bois Chesnu—the Fountain—the Beau-Mai—the Ladies' Tree—their mysterious nature—January 6th, 1412—Commotion in Domremi—Birth of Joan D'Arc—Baptized—her Mother—her Religion—her Godmother's Tales—Traditions respecting her Childhood—her Imagination—Grief at the Distress of Charles—her first mysterious Call—she believes St. Michael appeared to her—resolves to obey the Call of Heaven—St. Catherine and St. Margaret—Domremi taken by the Enemy—she flies with her Family to Neufchateau—takes shelter in an Inn for a fortnight—ponders on her Resolution to save Charles—a Young Man claims her in Marriage—she disproves the Claim—goes to Baudricourt—assisted by her Uncle—Baudricourt will not listen to her—Retires—John de Metz befriends her—Baudricourt and the People of Vaucouleurs at last assist her—she departs to seek the King.

MONGST the religious fanatics of the period, there was a visionary called Marie of Avignon. She found her way to the presence of Charles, and told him that she had seen in a vision the desolation of the realm; that it seemed as if armour had been brought to her; that she was greatly frightened, but was told (she did not say by whom) that the armour was

not for her, but for a young girl who would come after her, and was destined to deliver France from its foreign foes.[1]

Another prophecy to the same effect, founded on a fantastic interpretation of Merlin, also gained ground, that a virgin should save France, and overcome the 'men armed with the bow'—which seemed to indicate the English archers.[2] As the distress of the country increased, so did the reports of this prediction; it was in fact one of those which greatly assist to bring about their own fulfilment.

At the extreme frontier of France and of the empire, situated in Champagne, a narrow slip of land ran between the Duchy of Bar, the Bishopric of Toul, and the Duchy of Lorraine. This little canton, which was watered by the Meuse, contained but one walled town, Vaucouleurs. The people had always been French in spirit, and their close neighbourhood to the empire rendered them more warmly national in their ideas and feelings—a common thing with frontier populations. The Dukes of Lorraine and Bar had

[1] Whether this was a true statement, or invented after the deliverance of France, cannot now be ascertained; but it was deposed by a witness at the revision of the trial of Jeanne, more than twenty years after her death.

[2] Lord Mahon says, in his remarks on the prophecy of Merlin: 'On referring to the very words of the Latin prophecy, they were considered as of striking application to her (Jeanne's) especial case. The promised heroine was to come E NEMORE CANUTO, and the name of the forest around Domremi was Bois Chenu; she was to ride triumphant over ARCITENENTES, and this word seemed to denote the English, always renowned in the middle ages for their superior skill as bowmen.'—Lord Mahon's Article on Joan of Arc, *Quarterly Review.*

been in opposition to each other ever since the beginning of the civil war; and now Lorraine took the side of Henry VI. with Burgundy, and the Duke of Bar that of Charles VII.[1]

On the left bank of the Meuse, about five leagues from Vaucouleurs, was situated the village of Domremi. It was distinguished by a picturesque old church, erected in the thirteenth century, and dedicated to St. Remi. Near the churchyard, where the inhabitants of this 'outmost corner' of a great kingdom were laid to rest when their simple toils had come to a close, stood that humble dwelling which was the birthplace of Joan of Arc. At the back of the cottage, a steep path ran up a hill, through a thickly-grown vineyard. Towards the summit there was an oak wood, called *Bois Chesnu.*[2] Near it stood an old and magnificent beech tree, beneath whose expansive shade welled out from some unseen source a limpid fountain of the purest and coldest water. It had a traditional reputation for curing the sick, and thither they came, more especially those suffering from fever, to drink of its healing waters. Though no angel came down at a particular hour to trouble the spring, yet was it said to derive its power from, and to be guarded by, a mysterious race of beings—'the elves of hills, lakes, standing brooks, and groves,' of a date anterior to Christianity, and known to the Druid priesthood of Gaul.

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 138.

[2] *Mémoires de la Pucelle; Mémoires de Richemont.*

In the early mediæval ages this fairy race continued to haunt the spot—to make the leaves rustle in the boughs of the ancient beech, and to cause the springs to bubble up. The tree was called the *Beau-Mai*, or the *L'Arbre des dames*. Once a year the priest of the village and his simple flock walked in solemn procession round the venerated tree, singing sacred songs, and joining in prayers to Him who makes the earth to teem with beauty and blessings. At the return of spring, the children of Domremi were wont to come with their garlands of early flowers, and suspend them on the boughs as an offering to the genii of the *Beau-Mai*, and to dance round it with delight. The garlands were said to be accepted, as they invariably disappeared during the night; but no one ever saw the fairies who so mysteriously disposed of them.

In this humble village of Domremi, on the night of 6th January 1412, there was, according to tradition, a great commotion. The inhabitants were suddenly seized with an uncontrollable sensation of joy. They danced, they spoke words of gladness, they ran about as if they were beside themselves, they met, and congratulated each other, and then asked for what cause. What had happened to occasion such rejoicings? The cocks of the village joined in their delight, and crowed as never cocks crowed before. All this was most surprising; but yet nothing out of the common course of things had happened to break the quiet of the village, unless it were that there was some stir in the cottage of Jacques D'Arc, for his

wife, Isabeau Romèe, had given birth to a daughter. They were a poor but honest pair; he a labourer and keeper of sheep, and she could look well after the house and spin. Isabeau, it was whispered, had lately dreamt that she was brought to bed of a thunderbolt![1]

The child was baptized at the font of the old church of St. Remi, and named *Jeanne.*

The training of the little Jeanne (or Joan, as the name was called in English) was very simple, though in some respects exciting. She was a good and docile child, but shy of strangers. Her mother very properly taught her prayers,—the Creed, the Ave, and the Paternoster,—took her early to church, where she made her confess to the priest, and observe all the days and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. Jeanne had a godmother, and listened with wonder as she fostered the naturally imaginative turn of the child's mind by telling long stories about the Gaulish saints, who held a mysterious communication with all created beings.[2] There can be no doubt that after Jeanne's success in feats of arms, and when the general belief in her divine mission had been established, many stories respecting her childhood were circulated which were pure fiction, or greatly exaggerated; and wonders never lose in the telling.

Amongst others, tradition averred, and chroniclers wrote down, that when she watched her father's sheep—for her earliest occupation was pastoral—no wolf would come near

[1] Henri Martin. [2] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

her flock; that, at her call, the birds came down from the boughs to feed out of her hands; that (no very remarkable thing in childhood) she loved to talk to the lambs, as they sported with their dams; that she delighted to watch the windings of the Meuse amid the meadows, verdant with the young grass and the early flowers of spring, and would often sit at the foot of the *Beau-Mai*, listening to the rustling of the leaves till she fancied there was music in the air. But when night approached, she would gaze into the depth of the starry firmament, till every bright orb seemed to her excited fancy as a guiding angel.

She was a constant attendant at matins and vespers; was often seen to pray between the hours of service, even in the fields. Whenever opportunity occurred she would steal into the church, throw herself on her knees before the image of the holy Virgin and her infant Son, raise her eyes and hands, and remain wrapt in an ecstasy of devotion. The beautiful painted glass in the old windows had a charm for her that was irresistible, as she gazed on her favourite saints, St. Catherine and St. Margaret, rich in Gothic glory. She delighted in the sweet knoll of the church bells, and would reproach the sacristan if he failed to ring them, and promised him a reward if he would be more regular. When she gathered the flowers of the field, she would make garlands for the holy images; and never failed to bring her offering of a taper on particular days for the shrine of the blessed Virgin.

As Jeanne grew, so did strong imaginings, which more

and more possessed her; and when some sad report reached the village concerning the sufferings of France and the French princes, arising from the contests with the English, with unwearied earnestness would she implore the saints in paradise to have pity upon the poor people and the gentle Dauphin, as she always called Charles till he was crowned. Whilst thus devoutly attending the church, she still believed her godmother's tales about the fairies, though she said that she had never seen them dance by moonlight in their mystic rings under the *Beau-Mai;* nevertheless, she fancied that sometimes she could descry imperfect forms in the twilight, and could hear voices that sighed among the branches of the old oaks.[1]

So Jeanne grew; tall, stout-limbed, well-looking, and strong from her out-of-door occupations of watching sheep.

From her natural superiority, she was considered with a sort of distinction in her village. Though serious and given to reverie, fond of solitude, and seldom mixing with other children in their sports and pastimes, there was a good nature about her that made her ever ready to do a kindly act among her companions and neighbours, and much was she beloved by them all. She possessed, too, that invariable mark of a good disposition, a tenderness for infancy and old age. She could neither read nor write, but, like most of the girls in the village, she could ride a horse, and with the spindle or needle she would yield to no woman in the province.

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 140.

The small hamlets of the Upper Meuse, from their obscurity, had long been spared the contests that desolated so many other places in France; but this did not prevent party spirit creeping into them. It found its way even within the villages of Domremi and Maxei. The boys of the former called themselves Armagnacs (after the minister of that name, who for a time had been so great a favourite with Charles), whilst the lads of Maxei were Burgundians, friends to the Duke and the English.

Jeanne was an ardent Armagnac, and often saw her brothers return home with broken heads from their encounters with the boys they deemed disloyal. The elders of the village, in repeating the frightful details that reached them of the war, always dwelt on the hardship of the King being a wanderer, while foreigners usurped his rights; and told of towns and castles that had held out for him till they were burnt, and their defenders killed, imprisoned, or driven into exile to meet poverty and death. Jeanne listened to these stories with deep emotion, her eyes streaming with tears, and her soul filled with a sorrow too big for utterance.

Of a lively imagination, she pictured to herself in vivid colours the desolate scenes in France,—'*du royaume de Jesus*,' as she called it. The burning castles, the heroic nobles, the dying men, she saw them all; and her fancy pictured Charles as young, handsome, brave, active, and the most amiable of princes,—thus bestowing upon him virtues which he certainly did not possess. Charles

and France became everything to her ardent mind; she flew to the shrines of her favourite saints, and prayed them to have pity on the gentle Dauphin, and to lead him to be anointed at Rheims.[1]

It was in April of 1425 that Jeanne, being then fourteen years old, when running one day in a meadow with some girls of her own age, all at once, as if by an invisible hand, was impelled forward with such speed that, surprised at the sight, her young friends thought her flying. Jeanne, out of breath, stopped to recover herself, when, in another moment, it seemed to her that a voice said, in a commanding tone, 'Return to your mother.' She obeyed, and went into the garden of the cottage; the voice came again, but now soft and beautiful ('*moult belle et douce*,' she said), 'Jeanne la Pucelle, child of God, be wise, be good, put your trust in God, for you must go into France.'[2]

Jeanne looked around her: whence came that voice?

There was a brilliant light about the church. She was struck by an internal conviction that God predestined her for some especial mission. She felt, as she afterwards expressed it, that the ties of private affection, strong in

[1] The anointing of the holy oil preserved at Rheims was deemed so essential to the making of a king, that no sovereign in France was considered really such till his consecration with this oil at Rheims. —See Du Cange.

[2] 'At that time the name of France was reserved for those provinces only which formed the crown domain. The other provinces, when mentioned collectively, were called *Royaume de France*.'—Lord Mahon on Joan of Arc, *Quarterly Review*.

the heart of woman, were not to be her portion. She renounced the thoughts of ever becoming a wife and a mother, and, like a nun in her solemn renunciation of the world, vowed to devote herself to God alone.[1]

The voice came again, accompanied by a luminous appearance, encircling a Being of majestic countenance that seemed more than human, whilst a multitude of the heavenly host surrounded the awful vision: 'I am Michael the Archangel,' said the august spirit, 'and am sent from the Lord to command you to go into France and succour the Dauphin; for by you he shall recover his kingdom.'

Young as she was, Jeanne from that moment felt within her own heart the strength to accomplish the mission thus marked out for her,—the time, the place, were yet mysteries that God alone would unfold to her; but she felt the power of the mission, and accepted it. She burst into tears, knelt and prayed. Not long after, (such was her own account), the glorious vision again disclosed itself to her sight; but this time the archangel was accompanied by two other gracious spirits wearing crowns,—St. Catherine and St. Margaret. Michael told Jeanne that they were the blessed spirits chosen to be her counsellors and her guides.

From that hour the soul of Jeanne became in such a state of exaltation, that the world around her seemed less real than the world invisible. So greatly were her affections

[1] *Mémoire de la Pucelle*, Barante; Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 142.

moved towards these lovely visions of the saints of paradise, that she wept when they left her, and longed to follow them to their blessed abode. Again and again did they visit her, and spoke to her of her mission. Jeanne frequently had her fears; she was but a poor girl, who knew nothing of the way of arms; but the voices invariably encouraged her to dispel her doubts, saying, 'Go into France—go into France.'

About this time, the war of the rival kings was brought home to Jeanne in the most distressing manner. Several of the towns and villages of Champagne were overrun by the Burgundians, and Domremi was taken by the enemy; the church was set on fire (the greatest of all sins in the sight of Jeanne, who reverenced every stone, image, or bit of glass in it), and the simple and terrified inhabitants were so misused, that the greater part fled with such portions of their property as they could carry with them, and sought refuge in a small island in the River Meuse. Jeanne, with her father and mother, took shelter for fifteen days at a small inn in Neufchateau.[1]

Three years had passed away since Jeanne first heard the voices that proclaimed her destiny. But never had they been absent from her mind. She heard them in the bells of the church, in the reveries of her youth, in the fountain, in the sighing of the winds, and in the rustling of the leaves of the *Beau-Mai*—'Jeanne, Jeanne, go into France.' So strong was the power of her delusions, that they preyed on

[1] Barante, vol. iii. p. 273.

her in secret like a slow and consuming fever. She felt that they must be obeyed, must be carried into action, or they would end by her destruction. Let us pause for a moment to consider the circumstances under which she acted, and the state of mind that led to her final resolution.

Jeanne was highly gifted, of a lively imagination, ardent feelings, of a strong will and a fearless heart; and all these qualities were exalted by a deep sense of religious duty. From her childhood she knew how great were the sufferings of her country; she heard the often repeated prophecy that France was to be saved by a woman, and associated it with her earliest impressions of a mysterious agency at the Lady tree. Her indulgence in those long ecstasies, as she prayed before the holy images, and invoked the aid of saints and angels for the Dauphin, contributed to raise in her impassioned nature an enthusiasm that led her to consider her fancies as realities. She wished to be the woman to deliver France, till at last she believed that she was appointed by God to fulfil the prophecy which expressed His will.

Jeanne at this period kept her own secret, for she held both her father and mother in so much reverence, that she dared not distress them by telling the purpose over which she brooded by day and by night. She dropt, however, some words to a neighbour, who repeated them to her father, that 'there was a girl not far from Vaucouleurs, who, before another year was passed, would have Charles

anointed King of France.' The old man was so afraid that Jeanne proposed to go away with the soldiers (as there was a royal garrison at Vaucouleurs), that rather than have her do so, he said he would himself throw her into the river and drown her. From that moment she was closely watched, and no longer allowed to go into the fields and keep sheep. Her father endeavoured to draw her into a marriage with a young man who was much attached to her, and who declared he had a claim upon her by her own promise; but she denied it, appeared before the Bishop, and swore that she had never given him any such promise. She was therefore released.[1]

After this attempt upon her liberty, her voices, she said, returned to her with importunity: 'Hasten, hasten; go to Vaucouleurs. Go to Robert de Baudricourt. Twice will he reject you; but the third time he will listen, and give you an escort to the Dauphin.'

This Baudricourt was a French royalist, and governor of Vaucouleurs. But how to get to him was the difficulty. Woman's wit and resolution will seldom fail. Jeanne obtained leave to visit her maternal uncle, who lived at a village between Domremi and Vaucouleurs. She bade a kindly farewell to her home and her young companions, with a conviction that she should never see them more. But this did not shake her purpose, and no sooner did she arrive within her uncle's door than she asked him if he knew the prophecy—the prophecy that France, which had

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

been lost by the wickedness of a woman, was to be saved by a young woman from the Marshes of Lorraine. 'The woman who lost France,' she said, 'was the Queen Isabella; the woman to save France was *herself.*'

Jeanne's uncle, not understanding the enthusiastic character of his niece, fancied she was somewhat crazy, and put her off with a slight reproof for talking foolishly. But there was method in Jeanne's madness, which told upon the good man at last. She related to him so clearly the story about her voices, and in all she said there was so much good sense, such a strong reliance on Providence, that he was startled, and at length became the first who was convinced that, whether real or imaginary, she was herself firmly persuaded of the truth of all she said. He went so far, that he promised to go and speak for her to Baudricourt. He did so, and all the answer that the Governor vouchsafed to give was, 'Box the girl's ears, and send her back to her home.'

But Jeanne persisted, till at last her uncle conducted her into the presence of the Governor. She addressed him at first with the modest timidity of a peasant girl; but when she proceeded, and touched on the purpose of her coming, she grew bolder, and, nothing daunted by the derisive incredulity with which he heard her tale,—'My Lord Captain,' she said, 'know that God for some time past has caused to be revealed to me that I should go to the gentle Dauphin, who is, and who ought to be held, the true King of France; that he should give me men-at-arms,

and that I should lead them to raise the siege of Orleans, and then conduct him to be anointed at Rheims.'

De Baudricourt treated Jeanne as a fanatic visionary girl; and thinking her folly would divert the young officers o the garrison, sent for them, passing some coarse jokes about her as he did so. But (says the old chronicler [1]) though they came in a very light mood, quite willing to make game of her, no sooner were they in her presence than a strong sense of respect possessed them: they had no inclination to laugh.

Jeanne, nothing disheartened by a first refusal, applied again to the Governor to send her to Charles. Again was she refused. Again did she seek him fearlessly: 'Give me the habiliments of a man,' she said; 'give me a horse, give me some men-at-arms to guide me on my way. In the name of God, do this. You make too much difficulty. This very day, whilst you delay to send me, the gentle Dauphin is sustaining a great injury, and he will soon suffer a greater by your delay.'

Baudricourt, though he did not comply with her importunity, years after remembered, and stated it on oath before the Parliament of Paris (at the trial for revision of the sentence respecting Jeanne, to free her memory from the imputation of sorcery), that on the very day she spoke those words, a strong party of Charles's men-at-arms were defeated by the English.

Jeanne became greatly disquieted. Wherever she went,

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 93.

with every one she met, she now talked of having received a mission which the Governor disregarded. Again she betook herself to the church, to the shrines of the saints, and remained for hours absorbed in her enthusiastic devotion. So remarkable a person coming on so singular an errand, could not do other than excite public attention; and the young officers, the common men, and all the town, talked loudly of the prophecy, and of Jeanne's mission to fulfil it. The report spread far and wide, and was not without effects, as will presently appear. A gentleman named John de Metz heard of her, and, to satisfy his curiosity, determined to see her and lead her to speak of herself. He began by asking, 'What is your purpose in leaving your home to come to Vaucouleurs? We must make up our minds to see the young French King driven from his country, whilst we all of us become English.'

Jeanne replied, 'Ah! the Lord de Baudricourt will not attend to what I tell him. He will not believe me, and yet I speak the truth; for I must be with the gentle Dauphin before the end of Lent, though to reach him I should wear my legs off to the knees; for no one in the whole world, neither king nor prince, can regain for him the kingdom of France, but only Jeanne: there is no help but in me. And yet, poor simple maiden that I am, I would rather be at home and spinning at my wheel by my mother's side. But I must go and do what I say I must, for my Lord so commands it.'

'And who is your Lord?'

'God,' she replied reverently. Her words, her voice, the solemnity of her manner, struck conviction to the heart of the inquirer; and from that hour John de Metz promised that he would himself conduct her to the King.

We have but now noticed that Jeanne's pretensions to divine inspiration by her voices, in an age when superstition formed a part of religion, had caused her to be much talked of. Her fame reached the Court of Lorraine, where the Duke was suffering from a protracted illness. He sent at once to Jeanne, nothing doubting that if her pretensions were of heaven, she could cure him; but she replied in the negative. She had no powers for anything but the one great purpose—deliverance of the Dauphin. But as the Duke had applied to her, with a freedom which perhaps he little relished, she advised him as a Christian prince to put away his mistress, make up his quarrel with his wife, and take her back again; and if he felt disposed to further the cause of France, by giving herself (Jeanne) assistance to seek the Dauphin, she would thank him, and pray to God for his recovery.

Though Baudricourt had treated lightly Jeanne's personal application, it is probable that, hearing her pretensions so much bruited abroad, he began to think some blame might fall upon himself if he withheld the knowledge of them from Charles. But before he communicated with his Prince, he wished to satisfy himself that she was not a sorceress. For this purpose he applied to the curé of the place, and it was agreed to put her to the test.

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He would present to her a part of a sacred vestment—his stole. If possessed by an evil spirit, she would turn aside; but if by an honest one, she would approach it with reverence. She did the latter, threw herself on her knees at the sight of the stole, and so approached it. This was enough; Jeanne was no sorceress. Baudricourt therefore sent an account of her and her pretensions to the Dauphin. He treated Jane, however, with small courtesy; for he sent her back with her uncle to the village he came from.

Jeanne could not rest there, and in a few days returned to an honest woman with whom she had lodged in Vaucouleurs. There the energy of her character made so strong an impression on a gentleman named Bertrand de Polongi, that he, like John de Metz, gave her his hand, and as he did so, swore 'under the conduct of God' to take her to the King.

Jeanne's parents heard of this, and became greatly alarmed for her safety. They made every effort to withdraw her from her purpose, and induce her to return home; but in vain. She answered that the time was come when she must choose which to obey,—her earthly parents or her Father in heaven: she dared not pause in her choice.

Jeanne's mission was devoutly credited at Vaucouleurs, for the inhabitants took on themselves the cost of preparing her for departure. They commenced by cutting off her long hair (*cheveux bruns*); and instead of the red jacket she wore as a peasant girl, they gave her a suit of man's

clothes, as best fitting the resolution she had taken, and more appropriate to encounter the dangers to which she must be exposed in the way. Her uncle and a friend subscribed and bought her a horse.

Thus equipped, about the end of Lent 1429 she set out on her singular and perilous journey, to wait upon the Dauphin, then residing at Chinon. She was attended by six persons,—namely, John de Metz, Bertrand de Polongi, the messenger returned from Charles, an archer, and two varlets or servants.

Baudricourt's adieu was not encouraging. 'Go,' he said; 'Go, and let what will come of it.'

The sympathy of the inhabitants of Vaucouleurs was generously and touchingly expressed. They pitied that young and devout creature, who from a sense of duty was about to throw herself in the way of so much unknown danger. Many wept as they bade her 'God-speed.'

'Do not pity me,' said Jeanne as she turned her horse at the head of her little escort on the road for France. 'It was for this enterprise that I was born.'[1]

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle;* Monstrelet; Barante; Henri Martin; History of France in *Universal History; Dictionnaire Historique; Précis de L'Histoire de France;* Hollingshed; Florent d'Illiers.

CHAPTER VII.

The Maid's Difficulties, and Dangers of the Journey—rests at Fierbois in Touraine—Charles at Chinon with his dispirited Court—considers his Cause desperate—Jeanne reaches Chinon—Charles doubts if to admit her—La Trémoille persuades him not—Yolande advises him to see her—Castle of Chinon—Jeanne passes within the Gates—the Guard's profane Speech—her Prediction—his Death—Charles assumes the Disguise of one of his Nobles—Jeanne picks him out—tells him his Secret—his Surprise—Jeanne's modest Conduct at Court—her Feats of Arms—she becomes a Favourite with the Duchess Yolande—her Humility—excites the Jealousy of many about the King—she is sent to Poitiers—examined by the Parliament and learned Doctors—pronounced to be good, worthy to be trusted, and sent by God—the Fallacy of the Story of her having been a Servant at an Inn.

HE way to Chinon was long, dreary, and full of danger; the country to be passed for the greater part being in the hands of the English, and swarming with banditti. Jeanne and her little troop had to make forced marches, sometimes by night, to escape falling into the hands of these men. At others they had to find their way along paths almost impracticable, to cross rivers and streams rendered perilous by the winter floods, to find rest in outhouses or huts, and not unfrequently on the ground; and such was the distress

of the country, that the villages could scarcely supply a scanty meal of bread, chestnuts, and wine.

But nothing dismayed, nothing repulsed Jeanne; she would go forward, and achieve the enterprise she had so much at heart. Her spirits were never depressed, her confidence never shaken. 'God was with her,' she said; 'what, then, need she fear?' Her courage was inspiring; and her little band, who at the first felt doubt and hesitation, were not slow to gain resolution by her example.

One of the most remarkable traits in the character of Jeanne, was that of the power she gained and exercised over others. There was a fascination about her; it tempered her manner, naturally disposed to abruptness; and, combined with the firmness of her purpose and her noble religious trust, inspired a feeling of interest and respect even among the reckless men-at-arms. In this, the first trial of her authority during her adventurous journey, her word was law to all about her.

In every town where Jeanne halted she sought the church, and induced her companions to join with her in thankfulness for their safety. When at Fierbois in Touraine, a place of great resort with pilgrims, the church being dedicated to her favourite St. Catherine, she devoutly visited her shrine; and having done so, sent on the messenger to learn when her Prince desired she should move forward to his presence.[1]

Charles was at Chinon with his small and dispirited

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

court, daily receiving news the most disastrous; and more especially, that the people of Orleans, who so far had bravely held out, were on the very verge of famine and despair. To the human view, Charles's cause looked desperate. His own mother, the wicked Isabella, had leagued with his enemies against him; and wherever the few who remained faithful to him had lately encountered the English, they were defeated. But Charles had with him one true and sound-judging friend, his wife's mother, Yolande Queen of Sicily. She it was who had given her support to the Constable, Richmond, in opposition to all the attempts of the selfish and envious to poison the mind of the King against the ablest man, military or political, who had ever served him.

La Trémoille and the Archbishop of Rheims were at the head of the faction. Little did they care about the fate of France, so long as they could preserve the spoils they had accumulated under the indolent rule and misgoverned state of their master. These men, corrupt to the last degree, were so mean in their envy as to feel jealous of the maid, whose surprising story had reached them by common fame; and they did their utmost to prevail with Charles not to receive her. But Yolande, governed by better feelings, took advantage of the depressed spirits of her son-in-law to persuade him to admit the maid, wisely judging that possibly she might be the means to raise a popular enthusiasm for his service; and she drew from him an order to bring Jeanne at once to his presence.

That Gothic pile, the Castle of Chinon, situated in the valley of the Loire between Tours and Saumur, still exists to add the charm of locality to the recollection of one of the most memorable events in French history—the introduction of the maid to Charles VII. in the noble hall of the picturesque old Castle. The hall is a ruin; but the entrance gate of the city still stands, flanked by two stupendous and machicolated towers, even now formidable enough to show what must have been their strength and importance in the days of mediæval warfare. Beneath that stern portal (overhung by the iron-spiked portcullis, showing its teeth like a savage dog ready to fix its fangs upon the foe), Jeanne, followed by her little troop, passed on, as the envoy of Providence to the true but disowned monarch of a mighty realm. The disorganized state of the royal troops was apparent, as on passing the gate a soldier who kept guard saluted Jeanne with a ribald jest and a blasphemous expression. 'Oh, my God!' she exclaimed, looking at the man with compassion, 'you deny your Maker, and are so near your own death.' An hour after, the man accidentally fell into the moat and was drowned.

Jeanne was not at once allowed to see the King. She was sent back to a hostelry in the town; and some days elapsed before the Council made up their minds what to do about her, except that they sent a deputation to question her and hear her account of herself. The report was so favourable, that, although Charles again hesitated, at length a day was fixed to give her audience.

The time appointed was evening. It must have been a grand spectacle in that fine old hall, lighted by tapers and torches, and filled with the nobles and knights who formed the Court of Charles. Jeanne was conducted into the presence by the Count de Vendôme. Old and young, captains-at-arms and ecclesiastics, all were curious to behold the maid of Domremi. The modest deportment of the noble peasant girl, respectful but not abashed, gaining both dignity and courage from the sense of the importance of her mission, struck with admiration every unprejudiced mind. Charles, plainly attired, with no external marks of royalty, was stationed at the farther end of the hall, surrounded by a numerous company. He had expressly ordered that no one should point him out to the maid; she was to be left to find him out herself, as a test to prove the truth of her mission.[1]

Nothing dazzled by the splendour around her,—for many of the young nobles were richly attired,—with modest simplicity Jeanne walked up to Charles, threw herself on the ground, and embraced his knees. 'I am not the King,' said Charles, at the same time pointing to a gaily-dressed young noble about his own age; 'there is the King.'

'In the name of God, it is you and no other, most gentle Dauphin. I am Jeanne the maid, and am sent by God to regain for you the kingdom which is yours, and to make war on these English. Why do you not believe

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 96; Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 254.

me? I tell you truth, that God has pity on you and on your people. St. Louis and St. Charlemagne are on their knees before Him, praying for you.'

Jeanne's recognition of the King has been ascribed to her supernatural inspiration. It unquestionably astonished every one. But it must be remembered that for some years her mind had been devoted to Charles; he was the daily subject of her thoughts and prayers. It is not improbable she had seen some rude portrait of him, that bore a sufficient likeness, aided by her imagination, to enable her at once to single him out from all around him. That her imagination had much to do with it seems certain, as she always believed that her voices had pointed him out to her.

Charles raised the maid from her knees and received her graciously; but some of those who stood near looked on her with no friendly eye. 'She is a mad woman,' said an old captain of men-at-arms. 'She is a sorceress,' said a priest, and crossed himself. 'What bishop, what ecclesiastic has she consulted? Not one. She is a sorceress.'[1] Whilst this was passing, Charles led the maid apart, and spoke to her in the embrasure of one of the windows. Long and anxious seemed the discourse he held with her, and variously was it reported. It was stated that, as a proof her mission was from above, she told the King something known but to God and his own conscience; and from that moment he accepted her services, with full

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 151.

reliance on the inspired powers to which she made pretence. It was averred that he never revealed this secret thing; and Jeanne herself, when life or death depended on her answers, refused to satisfy her interrogators on the subject. Jean Pasquerel, who was her chaplain, long after her death averred that what she told Charles was simply this: 'I tell you from God that you are the true heir to the crown of France, and the son of the King.' There was much in this assurance; for so bad had been the conduct of his mother Isabella, that the enemies of Charles had long denounced him as base-born, and he doubted himself his right by birth to the throne.[1]

All present who looked on whilst Charles conferred with the maid, observed the change that came over him. The melancholy downcast look, which for a long period had overshadowed his usually open brow, was gone, and a smile, as of self-satisfaction, brightened up his whole countenance. 'One would say,' wrote Alain Chartier, who was an eye-witness of the scene, 'that the King had been visited by the Holy Spirit.'

Charles, on this occasion, conducted himself with the dignity of the prince and the courtesy of the gentleman. In the face of the Court, he declared his conviction of the

[1] Many years after, Charles told the secret in confidence to the Lord de Boissy. 'De Boissy repeated the story to N. Sala, "pannetier du Dauphin," whose MS. account of it is preserved at the Bibliothèque Royale.' *Supplément des Mémoires*, vol. viii. p. 262. See Lord Mahon's 'Joan of Arc,' *Quarterly Review*.

truth of the maid's pretensions, ordered the Palace to be open to her at all hours, and that she should be held in honour and well lodged.

The Dowager-Queen Yolande was not slow to show Jeanne kindness, and to gain her confidence; and soon the maid became the admiration not merely of the Court, but of all who could gain access to her. She did not change with her fortune. She was still the shepherd maid in all things, save where her mission or her voices were concerned; for when she spoke on those subjects, it was with an elevation of feeling that surprised all who conversed with her.

Her strict attention to the services of the Church won for her much respect; and her graceful management of her steed in the court of the Castle, while she wielded a lance put into her hands with perfect ease, delighted the warrior knights. Her cheerfulness, spirit, and good nature gained for her favour with the young and the old, both civil and military. 'It was wonderful,' says the old chronicler, 'to see how she conducted herself in the position she had assumed, with the weighty charge she declared to be laid upon her by God, and how nobly she discoursed upon it; for in all other respects she was the simplest shepherd maid one might ever see.'[1]

The satisfaction that Jeanne gave was not, however, universal: the priests still scowled upon her as a child of Satan. In order to satisfy their doubts, Charles ordered

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 96.

that she should forthwith proceed to Poitiers, where the Court of Parliament was sitting, and where several theological doctors of the University of Paris were gathered, having left that city in consequence of being unwilling to swear allegiance to Henry of England. Accordingly, Jeanne quitted Chinon, still wearing male attire, which she objected to lay aside. On being told the purpose for which she was removed, she only said, 'In the name of God,[1] I know that I shall have enough to try me; but my Lord will help me. Go on, in His name.'[2]

When we recollect that a peasant girl, not more than eighteen years old, who could not read, was to be subjected to the examination of one of the most learned bodies of men of the period, it seems absurd, and even monstrous. But if we reflect that witchcraft and sorcery were as devoutly credited as the Gospels; that compacts with the devil were held to be often made, and more faithfully kept than treaties between princes; that a lying spirit—if Jeanne's voices were such—might lead a whole army to destruction, instead of the relief of Orleans,—we can hardly feel surprised that an ecclesiastical commission was thought necessary to test the truth of Jeanne's pretensions before power was committed to her hands.

Even as she anticipated, she was hard beset by her

[1] The heralds always began their proclamations with 'In the name of God.' Jeanne did so whenever she spoke on a serious subject, or with earnestness. We still see old wills begin with 'In the name of God, Amen.'

[2] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 98.

examiners. The old chronicler, at this moment before us, gives a long list of the names of the great and learned persons who were in array against her; but as we fancy they would little interest the reader, we pass them in silence. Jeanne, on her arrival at Poitiers, was lodged at the house of Master Jean Rabateau, whose wife, a worthy woman, took a great fancy to her. On the morning of the day appointed for her examination, her new friend bore her company to the place where the Sessions were held. Jeanne modestly seated herself at the end of a bench, but on the arrival of the Commissioners she rose and respectfully saluted them.[1]

For two mortal hours did they overwhelm her with learning she could not possibly understand, and with a severity of handling that would have frightened any ordinary beings into losing whatever wit they might possess; but Jeanne was not to be so easily put down. Evidently desiring to denounce her as a sorceress before they found her to be such, these wiseacres commenced by a long and tedious discourse to show that she ought not to be credited in anything she had told to the King, and desired that now her whole story should be repeated without hesitation, omission, error, or disguise. Jeanne offered no objections; and all those particulars of her birth, life, and progress, with which the reader is already acquainted, she repeated before her judges without demur or variation.

'What a noble spectacle!' wrote Alain Chartier, 'to

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

see a woman disputing against men,—a woman ignorant of the dogmas they launched against her, with all the labyrinths of their *dialectique.*' But the maid met them with a firm spirit, and disconcerted their most sagacious arguments in a noble manner, by the simple good sense of her replies, and the fervid eloquence of her religious feelings.

'I am no scholar,' she said. 'I know neither "A" nor "B;" but I am commanded, by voices that speak the will of God, to raise the siege of Orleans, and to conduct the gentle Dauphin to be crowned at Rheims.'

'In what language do your voices speak to you?' asked a Doctor from Limoges sarcastically, in a broad Limousin accent.

'In a better language than you speak to me,' was Jeanne's ready reply.

'But if it be the will of God to deliver France,' said another theological Doctor, 'men-at-arms will not be wanted.'

'In the name of God, let the men-at-arms fight,' answered Jeanne; 'and God will give them the victory.'

'Do you believe in God?' was the foolish question that another Doctor put to her.

'Ay, better than you do,' she replied, evidently displeased with the questioner.

'But God will not allow us to believe what you state about yourself, unless you give us some sign that will compel our belief.'

'I come not to Poitiers to give signs,' answered Jeanne with spirit. 'Take me to Orleans, and I will show you signs for what purpose I am sent. Give me men-at-arms: I care not for the number, few or many. I will go, and in the name of God will raise the siege, and conduct the Dauphin to be anointed at Rheims. He shall be restored, and Paris shall be his after his coronation, and the Duke of Orleans shall be released from his captivity in England. There needs not so many words; this is not a time for talk, but for action.'

The learned Doctors were surprised and confounded. Jeanne had beaten them on their own ground, by her ready replies and her energetic speech; but they rallied for another attack, and cited passages from books and councils to explain their fears concerning her mission. She raised her eyes to heaven, and said with solemnity, 'There is more in the book of God than in yours.'

On that day they came to no decision; but there was another examination, and that ended satisfactorily.

Many of the Commissioners had been impressed by the youthful innocence of Jeanne; and they had been assured, by the inquiries made, that the purity of her morals was unquestionable. This satisfied them that she could not be a sorceress, as a belief existed, both with learned and unlearned, that the devil could make no compact with a maiden.

When Jeanne appeared again before them, their astonishment and admiration were no longer suppressed: they

confessed themselves overcome; all were moved, some even to tears, when the Bishop of Castres rose, and, in the name of the Assembly, pronounced that the maid was assuredly sent by God. Their official report to the King ran thus: That the maid, having been examined touching her life, morals, and her purposes, was found to be a humble, devout virgin, honest and simple; that to deny or hinder her intentions to serve her King, would be to show themselves unworthy of the assistance sent by God; that she ought to be conducted before Orleans, there to show the holy sign *she had promised.* The Archbishop of Rheims, who was present, agreed to this declaration.[1]

Such was the opinion of the Commissioners; but it is obvious they avoided saying one word that could be considered as speaking a conviction of her *supernatural mission.* A high-spirited, greatly-gifted young woman, likely to inspire the army with confidence and renewed courage to march to Orleans with a view to raise the siege, might assuredly be considered as sent by Providence, like all other merciful aids, without an especial divine mission.

Jeanne, worn and harassed by the anxious examinations she had undergone, retired to rest, under the care of her honest hostess; and whilst she sleeps as one so innocent and so noble deserves to sleep—sweetly, we will take the opportunity to say a few words on a point we have not hitherto noticed.

[1] H. Martin, vol. vi. p. 157; *Mémoires de la Pucelle,* p. 98; *Histoire de France;* Moreri, *Dictionnaire.*

Jeanne has been represented by Hume, and many other English writers, as a bold girl, who had been ostler at an inn in Domremi, and there learnt to manage horses fearlessly by riding them to water. But there is great cause to doubt whether she was ever so employed. In the *Mémoires de la Pucelle d'Orleans*, to which we have constantly referred,—a work, as all critics have considered, written soon after Jeanne relieved Orleans, and known to be a contemporary authority,—mention is made of her watching sheep; horses are not named, except to say how well she rode when mounted. In the *Mémoires de Richemont*, by Guillaume Gruel, a contemporary chronicle also that speaks of Jeanne, no mention is made of her serving at an inn. In the very curious and original letter of the Lord de Laval (which we shall give in due place), addressed to his grandmother and mother after more than one interview with Jeanne, and giving a circumstantial account of her, nothing is said about her having served at an inn. And in the *Mémoires de Florent d'Illiers*, a brave young knight who fought by her side, she is spoken of as a country girl who led a pastoral life.

Monstrelet is the only chronicler in which the writer of these pages has seen her mentioned as having served at an inn in her native village. He says that she had been ostler and chambermaid, and had shown much courage in riding the horses to water, and in other feats unusual with young girls.[1] But Monstrelet was a Burgundian, and

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vii. p. 21.

a bitter enemy to Jeanne, always giving his account of her with prejudice. It is not at all improbable that when the soldiers of his patron, the Duke of Burgundy, ravaged the village of Domremi, and put to flight the poor inhabitants, and Jeanne and her parents took shelter for fifteen days at a small inn in Neufchâteau, he might have heard of her being there in a kind of exile. And this circumstance might easily have been misrepresented when Jeanne became celebrated and the talk of every tongue.[1] Monstrelet gives a copy of the cruelly defamatory letter sent by Bedford to the Duke of Burgundy, with an account of Jeanne's burning at Rouen as a sorceress. Monstrelet's own remarks upon it are as heartless as those of the writer.

[1] M. Petitot adds: 'Nevertheless, it seems certain that during her stay at Neufchâteau she did the duty of servant at the inn where she lodged. Considering the poverty of her parents, this was probably the mode in which she and her brothers repaid the hospitality which they received.' See Lord Mahon's 'Joan of Arc,' *Quarterly Review.*

CHAPTER VIII.

Jeanne returns to Chinon—her Statement wherefore she wears Man's Apparel—Charles causes Armour to be made for her—she demands the Sword from Fierbois—her Banner—her Fame far spread—English intimidated, believing her to be a Witch—she heads a Body of Troops—summons the English to surrender—leaves Blois with Broussac and others—introduces Religious Reverence among her Men—conducts the Supplies—Dispute about the Road—Jeanne deceived—the Supplies placed in Boats on the Loire—taken into Orleans—a violent Storm—she enters Orleans at Night—welcomed—returns Thanks in the Cathedral—lodged at the House of Jean Boucheur—sends a Herald to summon the English to surrender——he is detained—she threatens, he is restored—Jeanne's Reconnaissance of the Forts of the Enemy—Citizens attack St. Loup—Jeanne flies to the Rescue—Dunois assists her—victorious—her Pity for the Fallen—English defeated—Gladsdale killed—English raise the Siege—Orleans delivered the Seventh Day after the coming of the Maid.

AS soon as the report was given by the learned in favour of Jeanne, the Council returned to Chinon. On the morning following the close of her examination, she rose eager for her mission; but she had still to wait. Before quitting Poitiers, many ladies gained access to her, and were so charmed with the simplicity and natural grace with which she spoke to them, that they could not restrain their tears

on bidding her farewell. To many who asked her why she did not dress according to her sex, she replied, that as she must be armed to serve the gentle Dauphin, she wore the dress that was most convenient for it; and also, as she must serve among men, she deemed it best for her own protection to be attired as a man.[1]

It was not till after a long debate that Charles and his Council determined to test the pretensions of Jeanne, by giving her command of a convoy destined to carry into Orleans a quantity of provisions much needed by the hungry and beleaguered inhabitants. The young and gallant Duke Alençon was ordered to collect a body of men-at-arms for this expedition, and to bring them to Blois, where, when all should be ready, Jeanne was to meet him. In the interval, Charles caused a handsome suit of armour to be made for her, gave her horses, and lodged her in a noble mansion as chief of the enterprise.

On being offered a sword, she declined it, saying, 'No, not that;' the sword which her voices had directed her to wield would be found under ground (no doubt she meant in the crypt), at the back of the shrine of her favourite St. Catherine, at the Church of Fierbois, where she had knelt and prayed on her way to Chinon. The sword would be known by five crosses engraved on the blade near the hilt. It was found as she directed, and brought to her. She next ordered her banner to be made of white silk, embroidered with golden *fleurs de lis*, and

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 101.

with a figure of Christ sitting on a throne, amid the clouds of heaven, and holding a globe in His hands. On either side an angel, in the act of adoration; one of these held a *fleur de lis* which the Saviour seemed to be blessing. Above were the words which Jeanne had assumed for her motto, '*Jhesus Maria.*' On the reverse was a figure of the Virgin. Charles appointed the Sire D'Aulon as her esquire, and Father Pasquerel as her chaplain and confessor. He gave her also two heralds and two pages,—one, a very pretty lad, named Louis. A baton, which she called her *Martin*, was given her with her armour, in virtue of her authority as a military commander.

But Jeanne's trials were yet to begin. That evil spirit Jealousy lurked in her path. She was hated by Trémoille, who, in his official capacity, delayed sending the funds to pay the arrears of the troops who were to form the army for the expedition. He even tried to obtain men from the King of Aragon, in the hope to dispense with Jeanne altogether. But it would not do; the clergy had pronounced in her favour. At length she arrived at Blois on the 25th April 1429, with Raoul de Gaucourt, who had left Orleans to the care of the brave Dunois, the Bastard of Orleans, promising a speedy return with succours.

The ordeal which Jeanne had undergone at Poitiers, her journey to Court, her interview with the King, the tilting at the Castle, etc., had all been talked of far and wide, and, before a blow was struck, greatly benefited the royal

cause. The Orleanists already spoke of her raising the siege as certain. The French troops were elated; and the English, who could not bring themselves to believe that anything Heaven sent would be for Charles, were fully convinced that a sorceress, armed by the powers of darkness, was coming for their destruction; they were terror-stricken in their camp, before even the shadow of an enemy could be descried. What, then, was their dread, when there came a flag of truce borne by a herald, who, at the sound of trumpet, delivered this letter from Jane the Maid to the English commander, the Earl of Suffolk:—

'JHESUS MARIA.'

'King of England, be just before the King of Heaven to the blood-royal of France! Surrender to the Maid[1] the keys of all the good towns you have won by violence. She is sent on the part of God to compel you to yield to the blood-royal, and is ready to make peace, if you will act justly, and restore that which is not yours. . . . As for you archers, companions in arms, gentlemen, and nobles, who are now before the walls of Orleans, return

[1] Jeanne afterwards declared that she ordered her scribe to say, 'Surrender to the King,' not to the Maid; the error was of his making.

to your own country; but if you do not, attend to what the Maid declares to you: that you shall see her shortly, to your destruction. King of England, if you act not thus, I tell you that in whatever place I find your people in France, will they or will they not, I will drive them hence. It is for this purpose that I am sent by the King of Heaven; body to body, to drive you all out of France.' In this strain, her somewhat long and tedious letter continues its tone of bold defiance. It was treated by the English with derision.[1]

Jeanne followed up her epistle by leaving Blois on the 28th of April, at the head of a fine body of men. Several of the first commanders of the day rode by her side, among whom were the Marshals de Broussac, De Culaut, De Loré, De Saintrailles, La Hire, and De Retz, of whom Henri Martin says, 'it was a devil riding by the side of an angel.' Jeanne supported the weight of her armour, and managed the warlike animal she rode, as if she had been accustomed to both all the days of her life. Her voices, she said, never forsook her, and her strong religious feelings prompted her to address the men herself, counselling them to make confession before they went into battle, and, as their chief, strictly forbidding all profane oaths and blasphemous expressions.

Jeanne, mounted and bearing her beautiful standard, rode

[1] There are many versions of this letter, but they differ from each other in nothing material. The above is only a part of that given in the *Mémoire de la Pucelle.*

majestically at the head of her people, followed by a vast number of priests, who chanted solemnly the *Veni creator spiritus*. That night was passed, both by the Maid and her troops, on the ground;—no wonder that, unaccustomed to such a bed, she arose somewhat indisposed at dawn. Jeanne commenced the day with a religious service, receiving the holy communion in the face of all the army. So impressive was her example, that men who had hitherto lived a reckless life of debauchery suddenly became serious, and craved to participate in the sacred rite.

The waggons that Jeanne and her companions were to convoy, heavily laden with provisions for the famishing city, rendered the march somewhat slow and tedious. On the 29th of April they came in sight of Orleans. Jeanne, who believed all that she did was under the immediate inspiration of her voices, on leaving Blois, directed that the convoy should proceed at once along the north bank of the Loire, through the district called Beauce, where the English were in the most strength. But the French captains, her colleagues, who cared little for her spiritual mission (except as of service to give confidence to the men), naturally considered themselves better judges of the art of war than an untaught shepherd girl, and thinking an advance in that quarter would be much too dangerous, advised the south bank of the river in Sologne, where the English forts (*bastilles*) were less strong, less guarded, and some indeed only in part built. Jeanne,

however, persisted, and the French gentlemen had recourse to manœuvre.

They found that she knew nothing of the country through which they were to pass, and directed the march, therefore, according to their own pleasure. At length, when they came in sight of Orleans, Jeanne, finding the Loire running between her party and the city walls, knew she had been deceived, and was greatly angered. Dunois had come out with boats; but on account of the low state of the river, the boats, it was found, if laden, could not reach any landing, except that of Chéri, two leagues east of the city. The wind was wild and contrary, the heavens black with thick clouds, and all the indications of a coming storm. It seemed madness to put the stores on board. The captains—even Dunois—advised delay; but Jeanne would not consent to it. All felt distressed and embarrassed. What was to be done?

'You have deceived me,' said Jeanne; 'but you are yourselves deceived.' And turning to the captains who were near her, she said, 'The counsel of God is more certain than yours: know that I bring relief from heaven.' The chronicler of the time avers that she expressly told them the wind would change and become favourable; and suddenly it did so. This was ascribed by many to her miraculous powers. Under her direction the provisions so needed were placed on board, and were taken into Orleans by the ordinary landing in safety, whilst the English looked on and offered no interruption. What

with surprise, and the fear of an encounter with the powers of darkness in the person of Jeanne, heralded as she was by a night of terror, for the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed with fearful violence, they kept close within their quarters, and made not the slightest offensive movement.

There was another convoy required for a second store of provisions to come from Blois; and some of the unwearied chiefs determined to return, in order to conduct it as soon as possible. They would not, therefore, on that night enter Orleans. They did not wish for Jeanne's assistance. She was displeased at their evident want of confidence in her mission, but consented to stay in the city with such men-at-arms as were not to accompany them, provided she might have her confessor and some other religious men left with her, to preserve the good conduct she was so desirous to establish among the troops. This settled according to her wishes, she determined to enter Orleans that night, April 29, 1429. Her welcome was enthusiastic: in despite of the angry elements, old and young rushed forward to receive her. She rode into the city on her noble cream-coloured charger; her standard was borne before her; and as she waved her sword, she looked radiant with the joy of having so far accomplished her mission as to have introduced supplies into the starving city.[1]

[1] *Mémoires de Florent d'Illiers.*

'The maid advanced;
Deep through the sky the hollow thunders roll'd;
Innocuous lightnings round the hallowed banner
Wreath'd their red radiance.'

Without dismounting, she led the way to the Cathedral; Dunois, who had remained, assisted her to dismount, and with raised hands and deep emotion she entered the sacred precincts. The troops and a host of the inhabitants followed, and by torchlight, within that ancient and vaulted pile, a *Te Deum* of thankfulness was chanted with heart and voice, by priests and people, for the mercy vouchsafed to the sufferers thus rescued from famine and despair.

That night Jeanne lodged at the house of Jean Boucher, who was treasurer to the captive Duke of Orleans. His wife and little daughter were in immediate attendance upon Jeanne, and helped her to disarm. She was worn and weary; and no wonder, since from early morning till the hour she came to the house of Boucher she had not tasted food. Refreshment was now offered to her, and with that hearty welcome which makes hospitality so sweet. But she took from the hand of her hostess only a little wine in a silver cup, and tempered it with water; her supper was a few manchets of bread. She retired to the chamber prepared for her. Her hostess slept in the room, and the little girl shared Jeanne's bed. Such was her prudence, that, being aware her enemies, both English and French, were desirous to detect something amiss in the hope to injure her good name, wherever she lodged she

took especial care that some one of her own sex should rest in the apartment where she slept.[1]

On the morrow Jeanne wished to attack the English before they could recover from the discouragement into which they had been thrown; but she was overruled by the commanders who remained to act with her. Determined, however, to do something, she sent a second letter of defiance—couched much in the style of the first—by her two heralds, bidding the English yield to the lawful ruler of France. Contrary to the usages of war, and probably in contempt for her missive, they detained one of the heralds a prisoner, with the purpose, they declared, to consult the University of Paris, whether it would not be lawful for them to burn the herald of a sorceress.

Jeanne learnt from the one who returned, that the English, and more especially the great warrior Talbot, in reply to her letter, had spoken of her in the most insulting manner, and sent her word, that if he could take her, she should be burnt alive. On hearing this the maid wept with indignation, and said to her herald, 'Go back, and tell the English captains that I insist on your brother in arms being restored to liberty. And as for the Lord Talbot, say that if he will arm, I will arm also. Let him name the place without this city; and if he can make me a prisoner, I will give him leave to burn me; but if I capture him, I will compel him to raise this siege and go hence to his own country.' With this defiance the herald

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 111.

was sent back; but it was not till some days after that the first herald was restored,—not until Dunois threatened reprisals on an English prisoner if Jeanne's envoy was not set free.

On the fourth day, the second convoy was descried coming by way of Beauce, as a promise had been exacted by Jeanne that it should be so. She, with the brave La Hire and a stout body of men, went forth to conduct it into the city. The heavily-laden waggons, the carts with wine, the sheep and the cattle—the English saw them all, and let all pass without interruption. It seemed as if they were stationed to watch for the protection of the city, rather than to subdue it. It was evident how much the besiegers were disheartened by the dread of Jeanne and her supposed supernatural powers. 'Before the maid came,' says the old chronicler, 'two hundred English would chase at a skirmish five hundred French; but since her coming, two hundred French would drive four hundred English before them.'[1]

On the third day after her arrival at Orleans, Jeanne headed a *reconnaissance* of the enemy's forts. The citizens followed in a crowd, as if they felt themselves safe as long as they were protected by the presence of the maid. On the 4th of the month, not expecting any hostile movement on either side, Jeanne retired to her lodging, and threw herself on her bed to gain rest and sleep. But whilst she slumbered, some of her men-at-arms with a body

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 113.

of the citizens (who possibly had grown too bold under the influence of the good cheer) took it into their heads to make a sally and attack one of the forts called St. Loup.[1] Little did they expect the resistance with which their hot-headed rashness was received.

Jeanne had not long slumbered when she suddenly started up and exclaimed vehemently, 'My voices call me! my people are in distress! their blood is streaming on the ground! My arms, my arms! My horse!' Her cries brought to her assistance her esquire, the Sire d'Aulon, and the good woman of the house. She caused herself to be hastily armed by them, and bade d'Aulon arm and follow her. The noise in the streets became louder with the cries 'that the French were falling on every side.'

Seeing her page Louis loitering, she exclaimed, 'Ah! you wicked boy, you never told me that the blood of France was being shed! You should have awakened me sooner. Oh! what wrong have you done! Hasten! get me my horse! my horse!—no delay!' The horse was brought; she mounted; and finding that in her haste she had left her banner in her chamber, she desired to have it handed to her out of the window. She seized it, and rushed forward at such a gallop, that the animal she rode, as he dashed his feet against the stones, struck fire. She was hurrying on, when, seeing a citizen wounded and bleeding carried past her: 'Alas!' she exclaimed; 'never can

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 261.

I see French blood flow without the hair on my head standing up!'[1]

Though it was averred she did not know the way, she rode direct for the Porte Bourgoyne; no doubt being directed there by hearing the clash of arms without the walls in that quarter. Dunois came to her side with a strong reinforcement; and though Talbot led the men against her, and fought, as he always did, with heroic valour, for many hours the battle raged with doubtful success. The English were finally driven back by de Boussac and his men, though Talbot attempted a rally. Jeanne led on her division, and succeeded in storming the fort. By her intrepid courage St. Loup was won. Few prisoners were spared. Some rushed to the church, and finding the priests' garments, hastily put them on. Jeanne reverenced the church and the very garments that belonged to its ministers so much, that, by her intercession, she saved those who had taken shelter in their folds. Seven hundred English perished in the fortress; the survivors who escaped retreated to other forts still unconquered; but the earth before St. Loup was strewn with the dead.

Jeanne, when fulfilling what she believed to be the mission of God, displayed a courage and firmness that knew no relenting; but no sooner was the strife at an end, and the dead, the dying, the wounded around her, than all the heart of woman and the tenderness of her nature

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 116.

melted at the sight. She dismounted, endeavoured to find such of the wounded as could be moved and succoured, and wept to think how many must have died unshriven! Long after this battle, when questioned by her cruel enemies, she said that although she always threw herself into the thickest of the fight, and risked her own life, she had never killed any one. She could never bring herself to shed blood, and she repeated that when she saw the blood of the French spilt, her hair rose on her head.[1]

The next morning, May 5th, there was rest; neither party thought of renewing the contest. It was the feast of the Ascension, and devotion, not bloodshed, occupied the thoughts and hearts of the army and the citizens. Jeanne's example was irresistible; and though slightly wounded in the foot, she spent the day joining in the public prayers of the Church, and exhorting the men to repentance; declaring that none should be followers of her banner who had not made confession.

The captains who were her colleagues held a council, when it was decided to make an attack on the forts on the south bank of the Loire. On the next day, May 6th, Jeanne and the brave La Hire passed to a small island near Sologne. They proceeded in boats to the spot where they had previously determined to land, guiding their horses through the water by the bridle.

Jeanne and her gallant but eccentric companion in arms commenced the attack on the fort of St. Augustine. The

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle;* Barante; Henri Martin.

English defence was as determined as the attack of their assailants. They were speedily reinforced by men from an adjacent fort, and the French were obliged to retreat. Jeanne, who at first was borne along with the fugitives, made a vigorous effort to extricate herself, and turned upon the foe. She snatched her banner from the hand of D'Aulon, waved it above her head, and so scared were the English at the sight of the supposed sorceress, with her magic banner, coming upon them, that they rushed tumultuously to the shelter of their bulwarks. This turned the tide. Reinforcements came up; the fort of St. Augustine was taken, and the garrison without mercy was put to the sword. The French remained victorious. After this great success, there was but *one* formidable fort remaining to the English. It was that we have already mentioned, situated on the opposite bank of the Loire, and called Les Tournelles. On one side it faced the broken bridge, and on the other there was a stout bulwark and a deep fosse filled with water from the river. This fort, says Monstrelet, was strongly fortified, and had to defend it the flower of England's chivalry, Suffolk, the Lords Talbot and Seales and Gladsdale, with a veteran body of men-at-arms, archers, and cross-bowmen, and the best artillery known to the age.[1]

The French captains thought the enterprise proposed by Jeanne far too hazardous. That night they held a council of war, from which she was excluded. At the termination

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 262.

of it, however, they told her that it was resolved to wait for the reinforcements expected from Blois, before the attempt on Les Tournelles should be made. 'Aye!' she exclaimed, somewhat indignantly, 'you have been holding your councils, and I have been holding mine. The counsel of my Lord shall be accomplished, and yours shall fail. We shall fight to-morrow.'

Jeanne retired to rest, rose at early dawn, and armed. Her companions in arms, however, though they knew her purpose, were determined to thwart it; they deemed it much too hazardous, and (one cannot suppress a smile) hoped to turn aside her attention by inducing her worthy host, Jacques Boucher, to tempt her with a little feast. They gave him a fine shad (*un alose*), and he said to her, 'Jeanne, let us have this shad for our dinner before you go forth.'

'In the name of God, no,' she replied, 'we will not eat it till supper; and when we have returned by the bridge we will bring a *Goddam* with us who shall have a share of it.'[1]

Jeanne then summoned her men, mounted, and, as usual, ordered her banner to be borne before her. She then bade adieu to the host, who would have detained her, telling him that ere nightfall she should return victorious. The captains, who really had no faith in her mission, were determined to thwart her rashness, and Gaucourt, bailiff

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 122. So far back as the days of Jeanne do we find this dreadful oath common among the English.

of the place, entirely concurred with them, and caused the gates of the city to be shut and guarded. But Jeanne was resolute. Her passage was stopped, she turned to her men and the crowd of citizens who had followed, and bade them force open the gates. Such was the confidence they placed in her, that she was obeyed on the instant. Her next step was to lead her men to take possession of the boats, cross the river, land without delay, and commence the attack upon the fort.

Les Tournelles was considered to be impregnable, and the English were quite prepared to make it so. They held Jeanne and her men-at-arms in contempt for her temerity. Certainly her danger was extreme. Humanly speaking, she had not a chance of success. But Dunois, La Hire, and even Gaucourt, who had the most opposed the rashness of her purpose, no sooner learnt her danger, than, like true chivalrous gentlemen, without the delay of a moment, they came to her rescue with their own gallant bands. It was high time to do so; for three of the greatest among the English commanders—Suffolk, Talbot, and Gladsdale—defended the fort with heroic courage.

For three long hours did the battle rage. The artillery, skilfully served, told fearfully on the advancing French, who fell in heaps, wounded and dead. Jeanne had placed herself in the foremost ranks of danger. She called on her men, she waved her banner, and saw but too well that the fortune of the day was turning against her people. A great effort must be made to compel victory, or all was lost; the

tower must be taken by storm. She seized upon a scaling ladder, jumped into the fosse, and was about to fix it against the walls to mount, when she was pierced by an arrow between the neck and the shoulder. She fell back into the ditch. 'Seize the sorceress!' was the cry; and a body of English prepared to rush upon her with eagerness. But her men lost not a moment. They plunged into the fosse, removed and carried her out of immediate danger, laid her on the ground, disarmed, and supported her. Overcome for an instant, the heroine was forgotten in the woman, and she wept, but in a short time revived and was herself again. With her own hands she drew the head of the arrow from the wound. D'Aulon, her faithful esquire, hastily dressed it, in order that she might return to the contest. She was told that her own men were disheartened by her disaster; for though they did not, like the enemy, attribute her success to sorcery, they firmly believed in her supernatural powers. To lose that prestige would be to lose all.

Her wound dressed, she rallied; and hearing that the commanders had ordered a retreat, she implored them to wait and give some refreshment to the men. Jeanne then drew aside, and with her accustomed enthusiasm addressed her prayers to her patron saints, and declared they appeared to her. Her standard, after she was wounded, had been planted in the Boulevard. 'Observe,' she said to one of the captains who had assisted and followed her, 'Observe when the point of my banner waves in an

opposite direction—towards the fort.' A few minutes after the wind blew freshly, and waved it towards the enemy. 'Jeanne,' said the captain, 'now it waves as you would have it.' 'All is ours,' she exclaimed, 'we shall succeed;' and mounting her horse, she rode forward to renew the attack.[1]

The men, refreshed and encouraged by the presence of the maid, obeyed her on the instant, and rushed on with that certainty of victory which armed them with strength to win it. The English, at the sight of the sorceress they had seen fall (as they hoped) mortally wounded now once more leading on her men against them, were struck with terror. They had heard of St. Michael being her patron saint, and notwithstanding their belief in her having satanic aid, they seem to have been bewildered between their fears of good and evil spirits; for some fancied they saw St. Michael, and another saint with him, who was the patron of Orleans, fighting in the air on the side of the French.

With the impetuosity of a hurricane a furious battle now ensued. Gladsdale (or, as the French called him, Glascidas), seeing the peril of the English, thought it best to retire from the outer defences, and to throw a strong body of men into Les Tournelles, the still unconquered fort. He was near enough to be within the sight and hearing of Jeanne. She called out to him, 'Surrender to the King of Heaven. You have foully slandered me, Glascidas; but I have pity on your soul and on the souls of your people. Let me entreat you to surrender.'

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 123.

Gladsdale and several of his bravest knights retreated towards the fort, and gained the drawbridge. At that moment (the old chronicler says, 'by the just judgment of God') it was struck by a cannon ball fired from the city, most likely from the ramparts,—the drawbridge broke asunder, Gladsdale and his gallant companions fell into the stream, their armour sunk them at once, and not one was saved.[1]

Still the English resisted. Jeanne led on the troops, bidding the men trust in God, and Les Tournelles would be their own. Dunois and all followed. They fought for life or death; there was no retreating. Soon resistance grew weaker, and at last seemed suddenly at an end; for as soon as the English knew that Gladsdale was slain, and that so many of their bravest captains had fallen, they were paralyzed with consternation, and the French took the fort by storm. Only two hundred of its defenders survived the capture.

The stronghold of the enemy was gone. D'Aulon waved the standard of the Maid from its summit. The wounded were removed; and the Maid, still mounted on the war horse which had done her such good service, led the way in triumph to the very gate through which she had passed in the morning, by her own resolute will, to achieve the greatest victory yet won for France. As she had before done, she conducted her people to the house of God; but not now to the Cathedral, but to the church of the Holy

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle; Histoire de France.*

Cross, where hundreds of voices united in a *Te Deum* of thankfulness and praise.

The victory, both by the French and English, was ascribed to Jeanne; but Monstrelet remarks, that in all these engagements 'she had with her the most experienced and gallant captains, who for the most part had daily served at the siege of Orleans, and that in each attack these had manfully exerted themselves.'[1] This might be true; but still it was the prestige of Jeanne that disheartened the English and encouraged the French.

The commanders who survived their defeat held a council; and the bells which rang out a glad peal in Orleans for the victory of the Maid must have sounded as a knell to their hopes, since they decided at once to raise the siege and march away to other places still holding to the interest of Henry of England. The morrow, the 8th of May, came with the invigorating influence of a cheerful spring day, when the defeated commenced, before their departure, the work of destruction by setting fire to those forts which were still uninjured—the forts they had themselves raised with infinite labour and cost. But Englishmen could never be wanting in courage, and they decided to risk a battle, though knowing by the vast extent of their losses how inferior they were both in numbers and strength. They formed in regular order, advanced to the walls of Orleans, and challenged the French to renew the struggle in an open field.

[1] *Monstrelet*, vol. vi. p. 263; *Florent d'Illiers*, p. 458.

The sight was not lost on the soldiers or the people within the city, and hastily seizing their arms, they rushed out in vast numbers, elated with the successes of the previous day, and determined to crown them by a final victory. Jeanne learnt their purpose. She was smarting from her wounds; but, hastily springing from her bed, she paused but to put on some slight armour, and with all the speed she could, ran towards her people and stopped them. 'Hold, for the honour of the day,' she said, 'it is Sunday. If the English will go, let them go; do not interrupt them; their going satisfies me. We have other work than fighting on such a day as this.'

She caused an extempore altar to be raised at once, under no other canopy than the vaulted heavens, summoned the priests, and in the sight of her own and in that of the retreating army, ordered the Mass to be performed with due solemnity. At the conclusion, Jeanne, still on bended knees, inquired 'If the English had their faces or their backs towards the French?'

'They have their backs.'

'Let them depart, then,' replied Jeanne, 'and let us be thankful for it.'

The English, finding their proffer to combat declined, began their retreat in regular order, but, from want of means to remove them, were obliged to leave behind them their wounded, their sick, and their stores.

Thus, on the seventh day after her entrance into Orleans, the Maid had raised the siege and driven thence

the English. This marvellous victory occurred on the 8th of May 1429; and from that time (till the horrors of the first Revolution caused its suspension) the citizens never failed to observe, with all the honours due to her memory, the anniversary of the raising of the siege of Orleans by the maid Joan of Arc.

CHAPTER IX.

Fame of the Maid—goes to Charles at Loches—anxious to conduct him to Rheims—the Council demur—she persuades Charles—declares her Purpose is from God—the Lord Guy de Laval's Account of his Interview with Jeanne—A tedious Delay—Jeanne persists—Suffolk at Jargeau—the Army with Jeanne attack him—she is struck down—her Gallant Bearing—Jargeau taken—Suffolk Prisoner—Knights his Captor—Arrival of Richmond—Beaugenci yields—Castle of Meung—Battle of Patay—the French victorious—La Trémoille and others jealous of the Maid—She insists on Charles setting out for Rheims—Charles and his Army set out—come before Troyes—the Town yields from Fear of the Maid—Charles enters Troyes—the Holy Ampulla of St. Remy—arrives at Rheims—Splendour of Charles' Coronation—Joy of the People—Honours paid to the Maid.

ALL France resounded with the fame of the Maid. 'It was said,' observes a modern French historian, 'that God, being wearied with chastising France, had sent an angel to raise her from the abyss of misery.' But Jeanne did not consider her work done. A second, and in her view a far more important point, was to be accomplished—the anointing with the sacred oil at Rheims. Her earnest mind, her active spirit, would allow her no repose. Though her wound was still painful, there must be no delay; and on

the morning after raising the siege, she left Orleans to seek Charles at Loches. The people pressed around her to bid her adieu; wept, embraced, thanked her for the wonderful deliverance she had wrought for them.

Wherever she passed on her road, there was as an ovation. The enthusiasm of triumph went before her. 'Those who were not fortunate enough to get so near as to be able to kiss her hand or her garments, kissed the very traces of the footsteps of the horse on which she rode.'[1] All this homage of admiration did not in the least change the character of the object upon whom it was bestowed. The good sense, the vigorous judgment, the simplicity that characterized Jeanne's manners and address, were the same as upon the day she left her humble home to seek and save a King of France. She had tasted of what is so sweet to most—praise, power, and authority; but she valued none of these, except as a means to enable her to work out the purpose of Heaven. Her modest consciousness made her fear for herself, lest God should be jealous of the honours thus heaped upon her. 'In truth,' she said, 'I should not know how to guard myself from these things, if God did not protect me.'

Jeanne passed through Blois on her way to Loches. Great was the stir on her arrival at Court, and Charles received her with honour. Without a pause, she told him her purpose in hastening to his presence, urged him to seize the propitious moment, when both Heaven and earth

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

favoured his cause—to call out his men-at-arms, and go with her to Rheims. But Jeanne was disappointed. She found Charles, as she left him, pleasure-loving, indolent, indifferent even to his own interest, when it required his personal exertions. Not only Charles but his Council raised objections of every description: the enemy was much too powerful; the enemy possessed all the towns and castles on the road; there was no money in the treasury to pay the troops; how could they, then, be called out to begin the march? 'By my Martin,' said Jeanne (her common expression since she had been in command), 'you make too much difficulty. I will conduct the gentle Dauphin as far as Rheims in safety, without his being turned back, and will myself see him crowned.'[1]

Still the Council demurred; but Jeanne watched her opportunity, and found her way to Charles when he was not beset by councillors and courtiers, threw herself at his feet, embraced his knees, and said, 'Noble Dauphin, do not hold such long councils, rather come with me to Rheims and receive your crown. My power to serve you will not extend beyond a year; employ me, then, while you can.'

Charles listened to the affectionate expressions of her anxiety to serve him with his accustomed listless ease; he paid more attention to the advice of the selfish and worthless men about him, than to the heroic Maid who had saved one of the finest cities of his kingdom. And in all

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle; Histoire de France.*

indolent characters, decision was to Charles a trouble, and he liked not to be troubled. Though so many about him were adverse to the Maid, yet there were a few who pondered on the wonders she had wrought at Orleans, and felt half inclined to believe in her mission. These did not hesitate to say to Charles in a whisper, that if it would not displease Jeanne, it would be as well for her to learn what her voices counselled respecting the journey she proposed for the King. Jeanne read their purpose, and exclaimed, 'In the name of God, I know well what are your thoughts: you would know what I learn from my voices relating to the coronation; and I will tell you. I was at my orisons in my accustomed manner, and complaining that I was not believed in what I asserted, when the voice suddenly came to me and said, "Daughter, go to Rheims, I will be your help; go." I was overjoyed at hearing this.'

There was still doubt and want of decision on the part of Charles, but Jeanne persevered, and declared that her voices said to her, 'Go forward, child of God; go on, I will be your aid.' This was enough to call forth her enthusiasm anew, and determine her purpose.

It was about this time that the young Lord Guy de Laval, who came with his brother and a certain number of his vassals to join the army, first saw Jeanne. He wrote an account of her in a most curious letter, addressed to his mother and his grandmother, which fortunately has

come down to us.[1] It is written in the quaint style of the period, but perfectly unaffected and natural. After telling the ladies how well he had been received by Charles, that he had seen the Dauphin, and what a pretty boy he was, he goes on to say, 'On Sunday I arrived at Saint Agnan, where the King then was. . . . . On the Monday I departed with the King to go to Selles in Berri, four leagues distant from Saint Agnan, and the King caused the Maid, who was already at Selles, to come forth to meet him. Everybody said that he did so in my favour, that I might see her, and she gave a ready welcome to my brother and myself.'

'The Maid was fully armed, except the head; she held a lance in her hand. After we had dismounted at Selles, I went to her lodging to see her. She ordered wine to be brought, and said that she would soon make me drink some in Paris. In seeing her, and hearing her speak, she seems altogether like a creature that is divine. The same Monday, about the hour of vespers, she left Selles to go to Romorantinat, three leagues in advance towards the enemy's quarter. The Marshal de Broussac, and a great number of men-at-arms and of the common people, were with her. I saw her armed in white armour, except her head, a little axe in her hand, mounted on

[1] The letter is addressed to '*Mes très redoutées dames et méres.*' It was printed from the original MS., and included in the series of the original chronicles of the fifteenth century, published in France in 1785.

her black charger, which at the door of her lodging was restive, and would not let her mount. Then she said, "Take him to the cross which is before the church on the road;" after this, she mounted without trouble, for he was as quiet as if he had been tied.

'She then turned towards the church door, which was close by, and said in a gentle, womanly voice, "You priests and men of the church, make a procession and prayers to God;" and then she went on her way, saying, "Go forward, go forward." Her standard was folded, and borne by a handsome page. She had her little axe in her hand; and one of her brothers, who had joined her eight days since, went with her; he also was in white (*blanc*) armour.'

De Laval then proceeds to give some account of the Duke d'Alençon and his company, who had come to join the Maid. Before De Laval bade her adieu, she told him that three days before his arrival she had sent a little gold ring to his grandmother; that it was a very small present, and gladly would she have sent a better, considering 'her *recommendation*.' No doubt (though this expression is not explained) the lady had done some act of kindness, which the grateful nature of Jeanne led her to acknowledge by this small token. He mentions her telling him that it was her intention to conduct the King to be crowned at Rheims, and that he, the Lord de Laval, should go with Charles; but he adds that it was not his purpose to do so, for some must stay behind.

At length, on pressing a decision about going to Rheims,

Jeanne drew from Charles a promise, common with the indolent, that he would consider it. But when the time came to prepare for the safe conduct of the journey, owing to the King's delay all the army that acted so well before Orleans had dispersed, and how to collect together another so efficient, no one knew. But neither folly, difficulty, nor jealousy could turn aside the Maid from her purpose; and she implored Charles to let her have some few men, in order to drive the English from the forts and strongholds on the banks of the Loire, where they were in dangerous strength.

After another tedious delay, this was granted, probably because a new spirit had been thrown into the war by the Duke d'Alençon, who took no part in Jeanne's first enterprise, as he was not then free to do so. He had been a prisoner to the English, and till his ransom was paid in full, by the law of arms he could not return to the war. Happily that debt was now discharged, and therefore he felt at liberty to accept the command of the army of the Loire offered him by Charles, accompanied however by the condition—a singular one to be imposed on a General—that he was to act entirely by the counsel of the Maid.

At Jargeau, the Earl of Suffolk was strongly stationed within a fortified town. He was attacked by the French, but made a bold sortie on his assailants. The new levy, less experienced than Jeanne's men who had done such service at Orleans, faltered and drew back; she saw the next step would be panic and retreat. She therefore, with-

out the pause of a moment, snatched her standard from the hand of her esquire, dashed her charger into the thickest of the fight, reanimated her troops, and turned the fortune of the field. On the same day she also saved the life of Alençon. Nothing escaped her rapid glance in the field. She saw that the Duke was in the line of fire from a small culverin, and that he was the object of the gunner's aim. In a moment she rushed up and drew him out of danger, when, unfortunately, a captain stepped on the spot just vacated, and was killed.

Jargeau, so obstinately contested, was at length taken by storm. Jeanne, with her standard still in her hand, prepared to mount the ladder and scale the walls, when she was struck down by a stone; but she sprang up again, waved her banner, and bade her men follow to the assault. Roused to enthusiasm by her gallant bearing, the French rushed forward; the struggle was fierce but brief, and Jargeau yielded. Mortified to be worsted by a woman, Suffolk retired to the bridge. He was pursued by a soldier of Auvergne, named William Renault, who took him and claimed his sword. What followed is curiously illustrative of the customs and feelings of chivalry. 'Are you a gentleman?' inquired Suffolk. 'Yes, of four generations.' 'Are you a knight?' 'No, I am not.' 'Then will I make you one.' The proud Earl employed his sword to do this knightly service to an enemy, and then gave it up to him.[1] It is grievous to add that nearly all

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 136.

the garrison was put to the sword; but in those dreadful times this was too common when the prisoners could not pay ransom.

That night the Maid once more entered Orleans in triumph. Her reception was enthusiastic, for the glory of the day was all her own.

At this time the great English commander, John Talbot, was at Beaugenci, where he was joined by Sir John Falstoff, with the resolution to defend the town and castle to the last. The French laid siege to it; and an unlooked-for ally presented himself at the head of a large body of men. This was the Constable, Arthur, Earl of Richmond. Contrary to the orders of the King, who had banished him from the Court, he determined no longer to remain inactive, and raised a set of sturdy warriors among his own Bretons and the people of Anjou. 'What I do,' said Richmond, 'is for the King and kingdom; we shall see who will dare hold me back.' Neither Charles nor his artful minion La Trémoille attempted it.

The *Mémoires de la Pucelle* assert that the Constable came in all humility before Jeanne, and entreated her, as the King had given her the power, to receive his services. But the biographer of Richmond states, that La Hire and others asked her how she meant to receive Richmond, and her reply was, that she thought 'he ought to be met and combated.' But they assured her that he was a good knight and Frenchman, and might be trusted. Satisfied with such assurance, she welcomed him with great honour.

'Jeanne,' he said, 'they tell me that you wished to fight with me. I know not if you are of God: if you are, I do not fear you; for God knows my good will to the King. If you are of the devil, I fear you still less.'

Richmond was one of those who believed in the supernatural powers given to the Maid, but doubted whence they came, if from a good or evil spirit. Those doubts arose from the strong prejudices of his own superstition; for he is highly praised by his biographer for the vast number of poor old women and others that he sought out and caused to be burnt as witches and sorcerers.[1] His opinion of Jeanne, however, soon altered, when he saw how devoutly she prayed to God and the saints.

Beaugenci soon yielded, but the garrison had previously removed to the strong castle of Meung. There the English were in great force, and in a most formidable position. The French hesitated; many even of the most experienced doubted the prudence of an attack which they considered more likely to end in defeat than victory. 'Shall we fight them, Jeanne?' said the Duke d'Alençon doubtfully.

'Have you good spurs?' she replied.

'What!' he exclaimed; 'shall we have to fly?'

'No, but to pursue; it is the English who will have to fly, and you will need good spurs to follow them. In the name of God drive boldly against them. If they hang on the clouds we will have them, and without loss

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont*, p. 280.

to our people. My voices tell me they will all be ours.'[1]

Jeanne's counsel determined the question. Onward marched the French. Talbot, Falstoff, and the Lord Seales, with others, decided to give battle to the advancing enemy in the open field, near the village of Patay. They held their purpose, and fought with that daring which, ever since the day of Agincourt, had rendered the name of an Englishman a terror in 'the pleasant land of France.' It was no longer such; the spell was broken. A panic seized Falstoff; he and his men fled like sheep before the wolf.[2] The rest followed their example. The brave Talbot became a prisoner to the Lord de Saintrailles, and above two thousand of his men bit the dust; the rest were prisoners or fugitives. All was lost! Once more the Maid triumphed.

'My Lord Talbot,' said Alençon to the captive general, 'you did not expect this morning how it would be before nightfall.'

'It is the fortune of war,' replied Talbot with imperturbable coolness. His captivity, however, was not of long duration. So highly was he estimated by the French for the noble qualities which marked his character, both as a soldier and a man, that Saintrailles at once gave him his liberty, saying, that there was no sum that could ransom a Talbot. It is pleasing to be able to state, that some

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 142.

[2] *Monstrelet*, vol. vi. p. 275; *H. Martin*, vol. vi. p. 178.

time after, Talbot repaid this generous act by doing a like service for Saintrailles. These are the deeds that throw a halo round the men of chivalry; honour and generosity constituted the spirit of their order.

Although the Maid had gained another triumph, this time it was one of mournful glory; for, according to Monstrelet, no less than three thousand of the dead strewed the field, with a multitude of the wounded and the dying. Jeanne's womanly heart was touched with compassion. A French soldier struck down a wounded Englishman who had surrendered his arms and cried for mercy. Jeanne witnessed the brutal act, leapt from her horse, expressed her indignation, flew to the dying man, raised his head, supported him in her arms, and caused one of her people to go instantly for a priest, that he might not die without the consolations of religion.

The effect of the Battle of Patay was marvellous. The soldiers, the people, would hear no name coupled with victory but that of the Maid. Like an angel of deliverance, she became almost an object of worship. The sick asked for her prayers, as if she could work miracles; mothers brought their children to have them blessed by her; and, more wonderful than all, though so long the custom after victory, at Jeanne's entreaty the men forbore all spoil and pillage. What a blessing for those who were the conquered! Peasants left their ploughs and fields, craftsmen their trade, to become soldiers. The better orders, who were too poor to buy armour suited to their station, forgot

their pride, and equipped themselves as common archers or sword and buckler men, and joined the ranks. There was now but one cry with all classes,—civil and military,—'To Rheims! to Rheims!—follow the Maid to Rheims!'

There was one place in France, however, where this cry 'found no echo,' and that was the Cabinet of the King. A mean, suspicious spirit may be served too well, and too much obliged. Jeanne had saved Orleans, had already humbled the power of England, and regained for Charles thousands of his disaffected people. And how did he requite these services — services received from Heaven by the hand of a simple shepherd maid? By the most heartless ingratitude, by jealousy of the fame of the glorious creature who had saved him; for he felt that he was nothing by her side.

Charles was a guest of his worthless favourite, La Trémoille, at his château, Sulli-sur-Loire, when the Maid, eager to convey to him the news of the victory of Patay, went direct to throw herself at his feet, and urge him to come with her to Orleans, there to confirm, by 'his loving presence,' the affections of his people; to be there reconciled to the noble Constable who had done such good service in the recent battle, and thence to set forward to Rheims, and be anointed as the true King of a great realm.

So delighted were the Orleanists at the hope of seeing their Sovereign after all they had suffered on his account, that already had they hung their streets with

tapestry, boughs and garlands, and prepared for giving him the most honourable reception.

Can it be read without astonishment, that all this Charles learnt with indifference, and received Jeanne coldly, though she came in company with the Duke d'Alençon and some of the chief commanders, who seconded all she advised? But no; it would not avail. La Trémoille, like a spirit of evil, stood between Charles and all that would have been most worthy for him either to give or to receive; for he bestowed small thanks, and would receive no advice. He would not so much as hear the Constable named in the way of reconciliation; and said that he would rather not be crowned at Rheims than have Richmond present at the coronation. Yet so anxious was Richmond to serve him, that he stooped even to solicit La Trémoille to be allowed to do so. He was refused, and took a noble vengeance: 'If I may not serve my country with my King's consent, I will do so without it.' And soon after he led the army he had raised to drive the English out of France.

Neither coldness nor thanklessness could turn aside the Maid from the cause she had at heart. She persevered, and at last induced the King to assign Gien as the place of rendezvous for the army who were to escort him to Rheims. But when there assembled, King, Council, and above all, La Trémoille, raised difficulties, and still insisted there were too many towns in the hands of the English that must be passed. It would be better,

he said, first to clear away the obstacles on the borders of the Loire. Jeanne was so disappointed, that, in a moment of anger, she left the Court, and took up her lodging in the camp. The spirit of the army, sustained by the heroism of the Maid, was too strong for the Court. Bravely had they fought to snatch the crown from the brow of the foreigner, and they would have their reward in seeing it placed on that of their native King. The indolent Charles, and his timid and jealous advisers, were obliged to yield.

On the 29th of June 1429, Charles, at the head of a heterogeneous host of men-at-arms, civilians, clergy, and mounted lancemen, all together numbering no less than twelve thousand persons, left Gien by the route of Auxerre for Rheims. Truly a march of sixty leagues in a country with many large towns occupied by the English, was not without danger. Auxerre would not open its gates, but made no objection to supplying the army on good payment. On they went, though the enterprise was a daring one; and that very daring constituted its safety, for the men were determined they would succeed. At length they came before Troyes, the capital of Champagne,—that very city where the iniquitous treaty had been signed that cut off Charles, the natural heir, from the crown of France.

There was a division of parties in the place. The garrison, composed of English and Burgundians, decidedly opposed the French interest; whilst the great

body of the clergy and the common people were disposed towards it; and the middle classes with the rich citizens feared (if he succeeded) the vengeance of Charles for their former disloyalty. Above all, a famous fanatical preacher named Brother Richards was in Troyes, and bade the good people beware of Jeanne. Might she not be an instrument of the evil one? The Archbishop and Canons of the Cathedral had their suspicions to the same effect. After some debate, it was agreed that Brother Richards should go forth, and try, by an unerring test, whether Jeanne were a sorceress or not.

Forth he went to meet the goodly company now approaching Troyes. At the sight of Jeanne, mounted on her charger and heading her own troop, Brother Richards made the sign of the cross, sprinkled holy water in abundance, and called on the saints. Jeanne's shrewd glance detected his purpose. 'Approach without fear,' she said; 'rely upon it, I will not fly away.' Convinced by these tests that Jeanne was no child of Satan, the brother conducted her herald into the city, and made his report accordingly. He bore a letter from her calling upon the town to submit to its lawful master, Charles, King of France. The Chief Magistrate treated Jeanne's letter with contempt, and gave it to the flames.

For five successive days, Charles and his hosts—civil and military—remained without the walls, expecting that the gates of the city would open to them. They had cause to feel anxious; for their store of provisions, which

they hoped to replenish by the abundance of the town, was getting so short, that the troops supplied themselves by plucking the corn in the ear and beans from the fields. A council was called, and timidity among the councillors once more prevailed. Better that the hosts which Charles had marched so far should retrace their steps to the Loire than go on. La Trémoille was most earnest in his advice to retreat. The Archbishop of Rheims, who was present, entertained a mortal fear of the Maid, lest she might be for going at once to warlike work and taking Troyes by assault, and assured the King that anything of the sort would be impossible.

Fortunately, there was one in the Council who must be heard with respect, an old councillor named Robert Maçon, who, in the days of the Armagnac party, had been Chancellor. Without ceremony, he told them that after all they had seen done by the Maid, they had no right to decide till she had been consulted. Whilst they were yet in debate, a knock of no gentle kind came on the door, and, certainly uncalled for, Jeanne entered. The Chancellor immediately asked her advice.

'Shall I be credited?' she said, turning to the King.

'I do not know,' he answered; 'but if you advise what is reasonable and beneficial, I will gladly believe you.'

'But shall I be believed?' she repeated emphatically.

'Yes, according to what you say.'

'Noble Dauphin,' she then said with her accustomed ardour, 'order your men at once to lay siege to the

city. Do not hold these long councils; for, in the name of God, I tell you that before three days are passed, I will lead you into Troyes, either by persuasion or by force.'

'Jeanne,' said the Chancellor, 'if we were certain to gain the city in six days, we would wait; but I do not know if what you assert may be true.'

'Do not doubt,' she replied again, turning to the King. 'You shall to-morrow be master of the city.'

The energy of the Maid gained her point. Several who were present thought that some power more than of man inspired her purpose, and they agreed to wait.

Evening was drawing on. Jeanne mounted her horse, seized her standard, rode amongst the men-at-arms, called them forth, and bade them, in the tone of command she always used when addressing the troops, to advance their tents to the very verge of the fosse of the city. She ordered all hands set to work,—knights, squires, pages, every one,—and, without the delay of a moment, collect fascines, wood, doors, tables, shutters, anything they could procure, and throw them all into the fosse, so as to form a heap; and then to place as a battery, on the side of this pile, the few pieces of small cannon they had brought with them. Not a moment's respite would she allow till this was done.

These preparations, made at night, for an assault, frightened the townspeople out of the little wits they seemed to have possessed. What were they to do? There was that fearful Maid on her horse, holding aloft that magic

banner; and, for a certainty, one of the sapient men of the city declared he saw a host of little devils, in the form of white butterflies, fluttering round it. All must be lost! They speedily made up their minds; and the good citizens cried aloud from their walls that, whether the garrison would or would not, they were ready to treat for a surrender,—ready for anything but fighting, and they lost no time to show they were in earnest.

The bishop, the magistrates, the principal burghers, the clergy,—all went forth in haste, bearing aloft an extemporized white flag, by way of a peace pennon, to seek the King in person; and before they could find him, the garrison also gave in. Never before was town or city taken by a quantity of old rubbish hastily cast into its ditch, with a young woman sitting on horseback and directing the operation. Charles and his timid Council were surprised into a victory over a set of citizens more timid than themselves; but greatly were they pleased by this safe and bloodless ending of the proposed siege. It put both King and Council into such a good humour, that they were not at all difficult about terms.

The King promised the citizens, amongst other benefits, that the liberty to carry on their commercial dealings with towns which had not yet submitted to him should be theirs, and the citizens swore to be loyal subjects for ever. The garrison had permission to leave the town, and take with them all their own property. But the haste in which these terms were concluded, caused the French to forget that

the garrison had a number of French prisoners in their hold; and these they claimed to retain as the most valuable part of their property, having an eye to their ransoms, and so were about to lead them out of the city.

The captives, as they passed the gate, observed the Maid, still mounted on her horse and holding her standard. They rushed forward, threw themselves on their knees, and implored her to take pity upon them—they were Frenchmen.

'By the name of God,' she exclaimed with her accustomed energy, 'they shall not lead away any one of you.' She instantly ordered those who had charge of the prisoners to stop. No one dared disobey her. She communicated with Charles, who (no doubt at her instance) ordered a sum to be paid to the garrison; and every captive thus ransomed was set free, and covered the Maid with blessings.

On the *morrow*, even as the Maid had promised, Charles entered Troyes amid the acclamations of the people. Jeanne was still at the side of the King. She had seen how injurious was delay, and how easily the indolent Charles welcomed it. Now she would allow him no repose; he must at once go forward to Rheims. The march was resumed, and the army entered Chalons. There she had the unexpected joy of seeing some of her old friends from her native village. They had come from Domremi to see the humble shepherd-girl they parted

from but a few months before, now leading her Sovereign, to whom she had devoted her life, to receive the crown she had won for him. She clasped her old friends to her bosom with all the simplicity of her affectionate heart. They never tired of asking her questions, How it was she had become so brave, and whether she did not feel afraid of death when she went into battle?

'I fear nothing but being betrayed,' she replied. She owned that she feared those who were about the King.

The march continued, and, on the eighteenth day after leaving Gien, Jeanne, with eyes and heart uplifted in thankfulness to God, beheld in the distance the towers of Notre Dame of Rheims, the sacred edifice where she was to witness the accomplishment of her mission, to which all that had gone before was but as a prelude. Charles had yet to encounter some difficulties. The Lord de Savénes had promised the Dukes of Bedford and Burgundy to hold the town, by means of the garrison they had placed in it, for Henry of England; and the Lord de Chatillon, who was the governor, would fain have induced the inhabitants to resist their native Prince.[1]

Charles was disappointed; but Jeanne reassured him, saying that he would enter Rheims without one sword being drawn to gain it. Again she prophesied the truth. Monstrelet says, that 'such was the fear of the Maid, of whose prowess the inhabitants were told such wonders, that they themselves resolved to surrender without attempting

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 284; *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

resistance.' For this purpose the principal citizens went forth in a body, and, by the hands of their chief magistrate, laid the keys of the city at the feet of Charles.[1]

The Chancellor, who was also Archbishop of Rheims (and who till now could not take possession of his See), was also welcomed. The evening of that day, Friday, 16th July, Charles, attended by the Maid and 'a noble chivalry,' followed by the men-at-arms and all who had accompanied him, made his public entrance with great state and ceremony into Rheims. The acclamations of welcome were universal and deafening; and though, from the shortness of the time, the preparations were hastily made, yet all was complete for the coronation on the Sunday. It was remarked amongst the wonders of the time, that everything needed for the occasion was at hand, or to be found in the city. Probably the wonder might be explained by Bedford having provided for the coronation of Henry VI. in France.

All now seemed propitious. On the morning of the Sunday the sun rose unclouded in glory. The air was fresh and balmy, and the busy hands of children and fair young girls gathered all the fairest flowers of the summer to decorate the churches on this day of joy. Early in the morning there came a noble troop of young men sent by the Dukes of Lorraine and Bar. This arrival was the result of Jeanne's forethought. Deeming it necessary that her beloved monarch should have the

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 285.

support of the neighbouring Princes, she had some time before addressed them by her secretary, exhorting the Dukes of Lorraine and Bar to make up their personal differences, and, uniting their powers for the support of their native King, to drive the foreigner with his pretensions from the land.

Both the Princes she thus addressed knew what had been her deeds; they believed that her mission was from God; and therefore they at once acceded to the advice and the wish expressed in her letters, and sent a noble deputation to assist at the coronation at Rheims.

She had twice written to the same effect to Philip Duke of Burgundy, but he still adhered to Bedford and England, and imbibed all their hatred and prejudices against the Maid, by whose prowess both his own and their forces had been defeated on the Loire. There was a simple earnestness in her letter which was really touching, and deserved more respect than it received from the Duke. It began, as all Jeanne's letters did, with 'Jhesus Maria,' and she then proceeded, as she expressed it, with 'hands joined together' in the name of God, to beg the Duke to make a lasting peace with the King of France, that they might unite in good heart, as loyal Christians ought to do, and wished him to know that all who made war against the holy kingdom of France, made war against the Lord *Jhesus*, and should never succeed in any encounter with loyal Frenchmen. How little did she think, when she caused these simple effusions

of a warm and generous heart, devoted to her country, to be written down, that the time was not far distant when they would be brought against her, and would help her to the scaffold!

To return to the preparations: the thing held the most essential in the approaching ceremony was the Ampulla, with the holy oil, carefully preserved at the Abbey of St. Remy, near Rheims. According to tradition, it had been sent from heaven by the hands of angels (some said by a dove) to cure the bruises of St. Remy after a severe fall, and was used to anoint Clovis after his conversion; and no sovereign was held to be legitimately crowned till he had received the unction of the sacred oil. A deputation of nobles were commissioned to bring it to the Cathedral of Rheims; but before the holy fathers of the Abbey would entrust it to their hands, they made them solemnly swear to place it on the high altar for the purpose required, and after the ceremonial to return it with all care.

At the hour appointed, the Archbishop in his robes, his jewelled mitre and gloves, bearing his crosier and attended by the canons and ecclesiastics, proceeded to the cathedral to receive the King.

It was a noble sight. In the long perspective of arched aisles, rendered more striking by the partial obscurity which gives so much of awe and solemnity to Gothic buildings, appeared a multitude of both sexes, the noblest and fairest of the province. The Archbishop

approached some steps, as Charles and a chivalrous retinue entered with due state and ceremony. A throne had been erected near the altar. The King came bare-headed, but robed in crimson velvet and ermine, and decorated with gold and jewels. As he entered, the organ pealed in harmonious accompaniment to the choral chant of a full and melodious choir. 'According to the Book of Pontificals,' says the old chronicler, 'in all rites and ceremonies was Charles crowned by the Archbishop.'

No sooner was he anointed with the holy Ampulla, than the Duke Alençon stepped forward and gave him the *accolade* of knighthood, which it seemed Charles had not till then received. Alençon, the Counts de Clermont and de Vendôme, the Lords de Laval and de la Trémoille, and another nobleman, represented the six peers of France whose duty it was, when Charles returned to the throne, to raise him in it, so that he might be seen by all present; whilst the chief herald proclaimed in a loud voice that Charles VII. was the crowned and anointed King of France. As with one voice, the assent of the people rolled through the cathedral like a low peal of thunder, and the trumpets answered in glad acclaim. Charles was young, tall, and handsome; apparelled in jewelled robes, with all the prestige attending royalty, his appearance excited much admiration. Yet there was one present, who more than all in that assembly fixed the attention of every eye, and engaged the interest of every heart: it was Jeanne the Maid, who, holding her standard erect, stood near the

altar,—'a celestial creature, on whom streamed those mysterious rays of light through the rich colouring of the windows above her head, which made her look like the angel of France presiding over the resuscitation of the kingdom she had saved; whilst the peal of the trumpets shook the vaulted roof of the sacred building, and seemed as if the call would awake the long slumbering dead beneath.'[1]

The benediction pronounced, the Archbishop ended the ceremonial. Jeanne put aside her standard, advanced towards the throne, threw herself on the ground, and embraced the knees of Charles. 'Gentle King,' she said, as the warm tears burst from her eyes, 'now is fulfilled the pleasure of God, who would that you should come to Rheims to receive your worthy anointing, and to show that you are the true Prince and the heir to whom the realm belongs.' All listened as she spoke; not the smallest sound interrupted her impassioned words; but the moment she ceased, a burst of acclamation, tears, and sobs expressed the sympathy of all present, as Charles raised her from his feet.

Before quitting the cathedral, he selected three of the young nobles who attended him, and gave them the *accolade* of knighthood. Again the trumpets pealed, and the people shouted 'Noel, Noel,' and the largesse was thrown among them. Charles then proceeded to the banquet which had been prepared for him and his retinue at the palace of the Archbishop. On the next day he visited the

[1] *Histoire de France*, H. Martin, vol. vi. p. 188.

Abbey of St. Remy, and touched many persons to cure them of the evil.

Greatly as Charles was honoured, yet even the glory that attended regality was dimmed before the presence of the Maid. The people followed her in crowds, and 'never wearied,' says the old chronicler, 'of gazing on her face.'[1] But those of a higher rank were anxious to celebrate her prowess. Knights, and even nobles, threw aside the emblazonment on their pennons and banners, and had them decorated with the same device as that on the standard of the Maid. The Church honoured her by composing a Latin collect to be added to the daily service, returning thanks for France having been saved by a woman.[2] Little statues were made, and called Jeanne, and were placed even in the churches. A medal, with a coarsely engraved head of the Maid, was struck in lead, and worn on the necks of women and of men, as they would wear a cross or the image of a saint.

The fame of the Maid spread into far countries; and the Duke of Milan sent a deputation to ask her to resolve the disputed question, which of the rival Popes might be the true one. Such was his opinion of her supernatural powers, that he took this extraordinary manner of showing it. Jeanne did not pretend to satisfy him, but civilly put aside the question.

[1] *Mémoire de la Pucelle.*

[2] See a copy of it in *Histoire de France*, by H. Martin, vol. vi. 189.

It is not exactly known at what period Charles first decided to show his sense of the great services Jeanne had rendered, both to himself and to France, by ennobling her and her family. It seems probable that he should have done so whilst at Rheims, where she accomplished his coronation, which from the first she declared to be the great object of her mission. The patent, however, was not granted till the December following, when all the rights and privileges of nobility, of what kind soever, including even that of noble birth, together with the name Du Lis, and the lily of France for their arms, were given to Jeanne d'Arc, her father, brothers, and family, for ever. With her accustomed modesty, the Maid asked a boon, not for herself, but for her birthplace, that the village of Domremi, so dear to her heart, might be freed from the taxes; and though her heartless Sovereign, at no very distant period, suffered her to be burnt alive, without so much as offering a ransom to save her, he did not recall the bounty granted at her request. For nearly three hundred years there appeared in the books of the Collector of Taxes, opposite Domremi, only the expressive words, 'Nothing, for the Maid's sake.'

The great modern French historian, to whom we have so often referred, declares it to be an error into which many writers have fallen, that after the coronation Jeanne considered her work was done, and wished to retire to her village home. She did so, as we shall presently see, some time after, but not at that period. She felt, whilst at Rheims, the same devotion to the cause of

France that from the first had inspired her thoughts and actions, and believed that it came from above. Her devotion to Charles was the same; and she looked not only to restore to him Paris, then held by the English, but to complete for him and his people the deliverance of all France. And after all was done, according to the historian just named, she entertained some vague and unformed plan to unite the Christian Powers against the Turks, and so prevent what seemed imminent—the fall of Constantinople.[1]

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 190.

CHAPTER X.

Bedford alarmed by the Success of the Maid—endeavours to secure to his Party Burgundy—Negotiations commenced—Bishop of Rheims questions Jeanne about her Death—Bedford breaks up his Camp—the Maid prepares to attack Paris—prevented by the Council—Charles goes towards Compiègne—Town sends the Keys to him—Masters of Arts sent to Tournay—Burgundy proposes a General Peace—Hollowness of the Proposal—the Maid, Dunois, Alençon, and others, desirous to attack Paris—St. Denis sends the Keys to the Maid—La Hire takes Château Gaillard—Barbasan found a Prisoner—Jealousy of the Court—Jeanne, Alençon, and Dunois determine on bringing Paris to Submission—Charles leaves St. Senlis—the Maid's Moral Discipline—her Sword breaks—Delays—Attempt on Paris—Jeanne's brave Defiance of the Enemy—her Danger at the Moat—severely wounded—Gaucourt sounds a Retreat—De Montmorenci joins the French Cause—Jeanne and the Commanders determine on a Second Attempt—Charles compels them to abandon the Enterprise—his ignoble Retreat to the Loire.

THE battle of Patay, the flight of Fastolff and his troops, the capture of Talbot, the coronation of the King at Rheims,—all these marvellous successes, and the heroism of the Maid, reviving the spirit of the French, for a while paralyzed the Regent Bedford. The first intimation he gave of returning life was to strike a blow of vengeance on a

very insignificant object,—on Fastolff, for cowardice. He not only deprived him of his command, but took from him the Order of the Garter,—which, however, he restored when his anger was somewhat abated; for Bedford soon saw that senseless rage would never secure to the English their possessions in France, and the throne to the youthful Henry.

The exchequer was low, and the troops unpaid. Bedford was subtle as well as brave, and proud as Lucifer. Two persons equally hated by him had to be managed at this crisis. The one was his brother-in-law, the Duke of Burgundy; the other his near relative, Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, and at this time master both of England and England's King. But Bedford had wondrous skill in the artifices of diplomacy. His first efforts were made to gain help from Beaufort, who proved manageable. The Cardinal, never scrupulous in policy, had just received an order from the Pope, Martin v., to levy a tenth in England, and raise a body of men for a crusade against the Hussite heretics in Germany. He obeyed so far as getting the money and the men; and no sooner had he done so, than he carried both over to Calais, and gave assistance to the Regent, leaving the heretics to the ban of the Pope.

At all times, and under all circumstances, there is a charm in success which carries with it the popular mind. So was it now with Charles. Crowned and anointed with the sacred oil at Rheims, thousands acknowledged

his rights who had before been indifferent, or felt too much in awe of the English to declare for him. Soissons, Château Thierry, and many other cities and places in Champagne, hastened to lay their keys at his feet. Bedford became alarmed at these losses to the English, and augured from them the decline of his own power; and though he treated with contempt the inspiration of the Maid, yet he saw with dread the effects that the confidence placed in her by the troops had already produced.

He determined, therefore, to act upon a policy which probably no other man in that age, and under such circumstances of difficulty, could have devised; but his foresight, firmness, and ready resource never forsook him. Bedford commenced by an attempt to secure to his interests Philip Duke of Burgundy; for it had been supposed that the Duke's anger against Charles had much cooled as time, that healer of wounds, flowed on, and that, whenever he saw a favourable opportunity, he would retire from the English to join the French alliance. Bedford therefore, by a most gracious embassy, implored Burgundy to come to Paris, for the purpose of discussing with him those affairs in which each had an interest; and he moved forward with the Cardinal and the troops.

On the side of Charles, the Maid, with the rest of the gallant leaders, proposed at once to meet the formidable Regent in a pitched battle. But Bedford learnt their wishes, and, brave though he was, he determined not to fight, except at advantage. Even with the late reinforce-

ment, his force was inferior in numbers to the enemy; and he had no Maid, nor even an Alençon, or a Dunois, to make up for such inferiority. The Regent, therefore, thinking discretion the better part of valour, drew off towards Paris. The Maid and her supporters were still anxious to rush forward and attack; but Charles caused the troops to move in an opposite direction.

The Regent, who had spies everywhere, finding Charles' reluctance to risk a battle, once more moved forward as if desirous to invite one, but took especial care to choose his position so as to render an attack impossible. In these manœuvres he had one decided object, of which he never lost sight,—namely, to avail himself of any error that might be committed by Charles, but as long as the English were inferior in numbers, to avoid becoming the assailant: for after what had passed at Orleans and elsewhere, another defeat would be fatal.[1] At length the indecision of Charles and the prudent manœuvring of Bedford resulted in the advantage of the latter; and with the Cardinal and his troops, he entered Paris undisturbed, to the great disappointment of the French.

To pass in silence many particulars that would be tedious, let us simply state that, principally by the advice and management of La Trémoille and Regnauld de Chartres, a truce of fifteen days was brought about between the French and the Duke of Burgundy; and negotiations

[1] *England and France under the House of Lancaster*, p. 288.

for a peace were announced to the army to have been carried on so far, that, at the termination of the truce, it was expected Paris would open its gates to Charles.

Jeanne seems to have seen through the hollowness of this Burgundian truce, in which it is probable that she perceived Charles was really a dupe, as she addressed a letter 'To the good and loyal French in the city of Rheims,'[1] wherein she bids them not to wonder if she does not enter Paris so soon as she would have done, for the King had made a fifteen days' truce, which did not satisfy her. 'I do not know,' she writes, 'if I shall abide by it. If I do, it will be solely from consideration for the honour of the King; but I shall hold together the army, to be ready at the end of the fifteen days if the Burgundians do not make peace.'[2] This haughty style shows, we think (and no wonder that it was so), that the homage paid to Jeanne by all classes for her extraordinary success had a little obscured her natural modesty and judgment. It gave some offence to the already moody and jealous Charles, and added, like fuel to fire, to the envy and rage of his contemptible favourites.

Paris could not be reached without crossing the Marne: the army, therefore, had now to march north. As they passed on, the people proved loyal: with shouts of 'Noel! Noel!' they greeted Charles as their King, now restored to them by the solemn anointing at Rheims; and when the

[1] For the entire letter, see Henri Martin, p. 202.

[2] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

Maid appeared, the multitude ran by her horse's side, singing *Te Deum Laudamus*, and hailed her as an angel from heaven.

'God be praised,' she said, 'here is a loyal people;' and so strong was her emotion, that the tears rolled down her cheeks. She turned to the Bastard of Orleans, who rode by her side, and added, 'Would that, when I die, I might be buried in this land!'

'Jeanne,' said the Archbishop of Rheims, who rode near her, 'do you know when you are to die, and where?'

'When it shall please God,' she replied, 'but I know neither the time nor the place; and would to God my Creator that I might depart now, leave off bearing arms, and return to my father and mother to watch their sheep with my brothers: it would give me such joy to see them!'[1]

This was the only time she had expressed any longing, loving feeling after her own home. It is probable she felt dissatisfied with the want of confidence lately shown towards her in the neglect of her advice respecting the attack on Bedford. What, then, must have been her feelings when told that Charles had received a letter from him, filled with reproaches for allowing the simple people to be seduced and abused by a superstitious and worthless woman, suspected of diabolical arts, condemned by the word of God's Scriptures? That he (Bedford) 'wished to make a firm peace with the French, and, if not, to appoint

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 168.

a fair field for a battle; and though for this purpose he had followed Charles, he could never find him.'

'Tell your master,' said Charles, addressing the herald who had brought him the epistle from Bedford, 'that he would have had little trouble to find me had he desired it. It is I who have sought him.'[1]

It was now evident to Charles that the fifteen days' truce was nothing more than a pretence, for some political purpose, to gain time. He was roused from his indolence, advanced with his retinue and army towards Paris, and found the English well stationed so as to block the way without coming to a battle. But the Maid, impatient for contest, placed herself at the head of the van, rode forward, and planted her standard in the very front of the enemy's trenches. She then caused her trumpet to sound, and sent her herald with a challenge to the English to come forth, and she would give them battle. Bedford made no reply, probably disdaining to answer the summons of a woman; but he suffered his captains to skirmish as much as they would, till at length these small encounters became fierce and bloody.

On the 16th August 1429, Bedford broke up his camp and departed. The cause of his doing so was unknown; but it was reported and believed, on good grounds, that he had received some disagreeable intelligence respecting the temper of the Parisians towards himself, and also concerning the imminent danger of Normandy. 'Forward to

[1] Hollingshed.

Paris!' was again the cry of the French; but Charles was restrained by his counsellors when there was every prospect of success. He moved in another direction, and on the 18th fixed his quarters at Compiègne, the town having answered the summons to surrender 'to the King and to the Maid,' by sending the keys to them.

Beauvais also submitted, after having driven from its gates the Bishop Peter Cauchon, of infamous reputation, who, with violence both of word and deed, had endeavoured to make the inhabitants refuse admission to the King. Cauchon never forgave the indignity he now received, and treasured in his dark and evil mind a purpose of vengeance we shall too soon have occasion to relate against the innocent and heroic Jeanne.

Notwithstanding the interference of Bedford, Burgundy at this period seemed disposed to come to a peaceable settlement of his long quarrel with Charles. But the Bishop of Tournai, a man of no character, with great force of argument, in which he was an adept, prevailed with the Duke to observe the oath he had taken to Henry. Charles, it seemed, had offended the Bishop by sending two Masters of Arts, with promise of reward for their exertions, to admonish the burghers of Tournai to prove loyal to him. The Masters of Arts were so well received, that, what with presents and being feasted by the inhabitants, one of them found himself so very comfortable, that he declined going away when his learned brother thought it time to depart. True, he weekly harangued in favour of Charles; but at

length the establishment made for him was found to be so costly, that the people of Tournai began to think that so much feasting, and such an expense for cooks and dishes, was more prejudicial to their purses than the eloquence of the orator was likely to further the interests of the King; and they got him away as fast as they could, by stopping the allowance for his entertainment.[1]

Again did the Duke of Burgundy send an envoy with a proposal to consider terms for a general peace. But it had really no satisfactory object in view for France: it was little more than a pretence to gain a breathing time for England to recover herself; and that, says Monstrelet, 'at this period, was to gain everything.'

Jeanne's clear intellect made her at once detect the real object of this proposal. She was grieved to see the King so little disposed to avail himself of the means which God had manifestly placed within his power. Her patience was exhausted, and after five days of irresolution on the part of the King and his counsellors, she could no longer brook delay; and on the morning of the 23d of August said to Alençon: 'Fair Duke, cause your captains and your men to arm, for, by my Martin, I will go forth, and see Paris nearer than I have yet seen it.'

She was obeyed. Alençon, Dunois, and the choice spirits of the army, without waiting to ask leave of the

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi.

King, mounted and followed the standard of the Maid. She entered St. Denis without striking a blow, the citizens, as soon as she appeared, sending her the keys. Such were the effects of a vigorous determination. Charles' affairs were not now desperate; they could be retrieved, would he but summon up an active spirit. But at this period he seemed satisfied with having been crowned at Rheims, and more desirous to lead an easy life than to recover his kingdom; and it must be confessed that the chivalrous men who supported his cause were not so much carried on by a motive of personal affection, as they were by the wish to see one native-born, and not a foreigner, King of France.

At this very time, whilst Charles lingered and sighed to go back to the south, the most important fortresses in Normandy were being won from the English by the gallant French Captains La Hire and others, and above all, by the shamefully misused Constable, Arthur Earl of Richmond. Can there be a more striking instance of the cold, thankless nature of Charles, than the fact, that when La Hire took by storm Château Gaillard, he found in one of the dungeons the brave Barbasan, once the defender of Melun on behalf of the King,[1] who for nine years had languished in chains, without Charles having offered to ransom or restore him to liberty? Yet such was the heroism of Barbasan, — devoted, perhaps, more to his country than to his ungrateful master,—that no sooner was he set

[1] Monstrelet, vol. v. p. 230.

free, than, with all the vivacity of a French spirit, he enrolled himself in the army of the King. Richmond also continued to act with like energy, took many places from the enemy, menaced Evreux, and by his efforts raised a large body of Normans, who longed to cast off the English yoke.

But fair as the prospect was for France, it was overcast by the foul fiend Jealousy. La Trémoille felt he was looked upon as nothing by the side of the Maid and her party. Even Charles could hardly stomach being obliged to a shepherd-girl for the saving of Orleans and the recovery of a crown; and many of the obstacles that started up to impede the course of her animating spirit, had their root in bitterness and pride. But Jeanne never swerved from her purpose. She could not rest satisfied with the unopposed possession of St. Denis. Paris was before her, and she longed to master it. Day after day, hour after hour on her horse, sometimes attended only by D'Aulon, she was reconnoitring the city from gate to gate, to ascertain which would be the best point for an assault. Nothing, however, could be done without the King. Paris was the capital of France, and it must not be taken, now that he was present with the army, without his consent. Many within the walls were friendly to him; but Burgundians formed the garrison, and the citizens were neither bold nor warlike. The Armagnac Ministry, or rather faction, had grievously oppressed them whilst Charles was Dauphin, and they feared

that, if the French prevailed, the dreaded faction might come again into power.

But Jeanne, Alençon, and Dunois had no fears, except those which it was impossible not to entertain for the perverseness and indecision of the King and his counsellors, particularly La Trémoille. Paris they resolved to take; but then Charles must come and sanction the bold deed. Messenger after messenger did they despatch to him; but he was now at Senlis, a very pleasant spot, and he liked not to be disturbed. At length, on the 1st of September, Alençon went in person: 'Sire, only show yourself before the walls of Paris, and we will compel the gates to open to you.'

'Well then, Alençon, I will come to-morrow.'

The morrow came; a fine autumn sun (cheering every eye and enlivening every heart) rose and set, but no Charles appeared. The disappointment was terrible; for when Alençon returned from the King, he had found Jeanne, as he left her, watching the towers and steeples of Paris, and impatient to pass within the walls. 'Paris must be ours,' she said; 'a more than human power commands it, and it must be obeyed.'

At last, on the 7th of September, Charles came from Senlis, but only as far as St. Denis. Jeanne was overwhelmed with joy; the army caught the spirit of her heroic feelings, and shouted, 'She will take the King into Paris—to-morrow, to-morrow; let us forward to the assault!'[1] The voices of Jeanne (as she afterwards stated)

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 178.

were silent at this important crisis. Falsehood was foreign to her nature. She taught nothing but what she herself believed, and all along had been most careful to keep up amongst her followers a feeling of confidence in the revelations of her voices. At this moment she dare not shake it; so, like her supernatural guides or imaginings, she too remained silent. Another circumstance somewhat affected even her firm spirit. The respect for religion and morals which Jeanne, by her example and enthusiasm, infused into the conduct of the troops, had produced the happiest effects. She had forbidden a profane word or oath being uttered, and would not suffer the presence of a harlot in the camp: the sight of one of these, she declared, was a horror to her. All went well for a time; but the indolent life the men had lately led began to show itself in their relaxation of discipline and morals, and they fell back into their old habits of licentiousness. Jeanne endeavoured in vain to remove the evil, and even preached to several of the unhappy women, in the hope to reform them. On some occasion, however, one of these so misbehaved herself, that Jeanne, always vehement when her passions were roused, struck her with the flat part of the blade of her sword. The blow must have been a smart one, as the blade broke at the hilt. The sword was the mysterious one, taken, as she declared, by the instruction of her voices, from the Chapel of St. Catherine at Fierbois. This accident, in an age when omens, signs, and symbols

caused terror to the superstitious, was seriously discouraging to the army. Even Charles was shocked by it, and he reproved Jeanne, telling her that she ought to have taken a good stick instead of her sword. He ordered his own armourers to repair it; but they declared they found it impossible to do so, or even to make one like it. Jeanne was much vexed by the accident, but obtained another weapon, and girded it on her side.[1]

The delays made by the King, and the loss of time in the fifteen days' fruitless truce, proved more hurtful to the cause of Charles than the breaking of the mysterious sword, or even the silence of Jeanne's voices. It had given time to the Burgundians to organize the defence of Paris, reinforce the garrison, plant *coulevrines* on the towers and ramparts, and make deeper the inner moat that ran close under the walls. The army of Charles consisted of twelve thousand men. These were to be led to the attack by Alençon, Dunois, the Count de Clermont, the Maid, the Sire de Retz, and the Sire de Gaucourt. The two last named had always hated, envied, and opposed Jeanne; and on this occasion, as seemed pretty evident in the sequel, they wished her to fail.

It was on the 8th of September 1429, a day held sacred in the Church of Rome as that of the birth of the Virgin Mary, that the Maid caused her standard to be borne before her; not, however, by D'Aulon. A captain, St. Vallier, commenced the assault by setting fire to the

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle*, p. 191.

Boulevard and the gate of St. Honoré. Jeanne seeing this, rushed with her people into the *mêlée* of the fight, and wrenched a sword from a man-at-arms who bore down upon her. The Boulevard was carried; and eager to follow up this success, the Maid passed beyond the dry outer moat, and sprang upon the mound which divided it from the flooded moat. She was near enough to the walls to make herself audible, and exclaimed to those on the ramparts, 'Yield, yield this city to the King of France!' She was answered with insult.

Not knowing the depth of the moat, she tried it with her lance, and found it much too deep to be crossed. With her accustomed promptitude, she ordered her men to bring fascines, anything they could find, to throw into the moat so as to render it passable, that with their scaling ladders they might mount the walls and take the city by storm. But means were wanting. De Retz had never warned Jeanne, though he knew it, of the increased depth of the moat, and her people were not provided with fascines enough to carry out her purpose. But she would not retreat. In the midst of a shower of balls from *coulevrines*, arrows and flints from cross-bows, she stood unmoved. Percival de Cagni, who was with Alençon, and in after years wrote an account of the action, declared that no Frenchman who was near Jeanne on that day was killed; but he was mistaken. He added, 'It was the grace of God, and the hour of the Maid,' for he devoutly believed in her mission. Sunset drew on, but she still held her

purpose—no retreat. The brave man who bore her standard erect by her side, was struck by an arrow in the foot. He raised his vizor to enable him to draw it out; and whilst in the act of stooping to do so, another and more fatal shaft pierced him to the brain. He fell dead on the spot, and the standard fell with him. Jeanne turned to look on the slain bearer of it, and said, 'I could have better spared my whole troop than thee, my faithful soldier.'

In another minute she was herself struck down by an arrow that wounded her in the thigh. She could not rise, but though smarting from the pain of her wound, outstretched on the very verge of the moat, and the aim of every dart, she declared that she would not be raised from the spot till the walls were scaled and Paris won! As she thus lay, with a spirit that defied physical suffering, she exhorted the men at any cost of labour or life to seek everywhere for hurdles, wood, anything to render the moat passable, and to storm the city. Gaucourt—the jealous, the mean Gaucourt, was near her; and for fear she should be obeyed, and by her command the troops succeed, he gave orders to sound a RETREAT. Jeanne, with an energy that bordered on distraction, implored him to remain; but he would not. The trumpets sounded, and Paris was left in the hands of English and Burgundians, and not till between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock that night was the heroic Maid raised from the ground, suffering (as she long after declared) torture from her wound. She was carried to La

Chapelle, a village between Paris and St. Denis. 'By my Martin,' was her exclamation as they placed her on her horse to lead her away,—'By my Martin, the city might have been won!'

She was right. If Gaucourt, De Retz, and others had not proved treacherous to the Maid, or had Charles been present to re-animate the men after Jeanne was rendered helpless, so strong a party was there favourable to the French King within the walls, that had the moat been passed and even the very semblance of an attack been sustained, the citizens would have taken heart and have opened their gates to him. Jeanne's wound was dressed, and under the direction of her faithful D'Aulon she was put to bed and carefully attended. But her spirits rose with the lark; she could not rest. She caused herself to be dressed, and knowing who were the true men, begged to be removed to the quarters of Alençon, as she must see him. Her interview was brief; she begged him without delay to order his trumpets to sound and resume the attack, declared her wound was better, that she would help, and added, 'I will not leave Paris till we are masters of the city!'

A council of war was immediately held between the chiefs. Whilst it was going on, a goodly company of about sixty gentlemen, with banners flying and trumpets sounding, were seen approaching in regular order. A herald stepped forward and announced their purpose. The Lord de Montmorenci, who hitherto had been attached to the

party of the Regent Bedford and the Duke of Burgundy, had resolved to leave them, and acknowledge Charles VII. as King of France. He had passed out of Paris, and was come to join the army of the inspired Maid.

The joy of Jeanne was overpowering; she expressed her thankfulness in blessings and in tears. Alençon, like herself, was overjoyed at such an influential and unexpected ally; and the other young chiefs were eager to renew the assault. The Maid, though suffering much pain from her wound, begged to be placed on her horse as a leader of the contest. All were now ready for the start, and once more the cry was, 'To Paris, to Paris!' no one doubting a triumphant close of the enterprise. But who shall speak the vexation of the chiefs, when the Duke de Bar and another Prince of the blood came in haste from the King to order Alençon and the Maid to turn back, and the men to return to St. Denis?

The disappointment was felt by every man bearing arms; and Jeanne would not consent to give up the taking of Paris, when the city seemed within her grasp. There was an easy way, she thought, to get to it, by a bridge that led across the Seine in a direct line for Paris, and was not far from where the King had ordered the troops to be stationed at St. Denis. Alençon, Dunois, Montmorenci, and several of the most spirited young nobles, approved the plan, and declared their willingness to adopt it: they agreed that Paris should be taken for Charles in spite of himself. All was speedily arranged;

the attack was to be renewed on the left bank of the Seine, and the next morning was the time appointed for it.

On that morning, September the 10th, at an early hour, the Maid, with Alençon, and all the army, placed themselves in due order, and moved towards the Seine; but the bridge no longer existed! The King had learnt their intention to win for him his capital; and he caused the bridge to be destroyed during the night. 'All comment,' says Henri Martin, 'will fall short of the facts. There is not in modern history a crime comparable to that of Charles, against God and against his country; and also nothing is comparable to the greatness of Jeanne d'Arc.'[1]

Nothing can be more just than these comments. The Maid, Alençon, Dunois, all who had any sense of honour or humanity, represented to Charles, that now to leave Paris in the possession of the Burgundians and the English, would be an act of the greatest cruelty to all those smaller cities, towns, and villages in the vicinity, which had submitted to him. The garrison of Paris would have but to issue forth to wreak their vengeance on their weaker neighbours, and ravage and devour on every side; and this was the case in no very long time after Charles' cruel desertion of those who had proved themselves loyal. The honest counsellors whom he so slighted, at the cost of their lives would have supported him in a brave and manly course of action; but their advice proved vain. La Trémoille, Gaucourt, De Retz, and the Archbishop of

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 213.

Rheims, those envious spirits, upheld their master in his selfish indolence, and persuaded him to return to the south, where his pleasant life, spent in doing nothing worthy of a King, would be undisturbed.

They said that, when in Gien, Charles could treat with the Duke of Burgundy about the often-talked-of general peace; and intimated also, that, though from no want of courage, the Maid had failed in her enterprise before Paris, and had lost her prestige with the troops. This last assertion was untrue; for her devoted resolution to renew the siege at the time she was suffering from the agony of her wound, had rendered her the admiration of every man in the army.

Jeanne's painful sense of the King's indifference may be inferred from what followed. She expressed her feelings in a manner characteristic of her deep reverence for the mission which, as she believed, was confided to her by Providence. She believed that her continuing to act for the service of the King would no longer be acceptable. She therefore took her armour, and with the sword that she had wrested from the hand of the soldier who assailed her life, hung it up before the image of the Virgin Mary and the relics of St. Denis, the saint to whom both the church and the kingdom were dedicated. She then expressed a wish to remain at St. Denis, saying that her voices had directed her to do so. We are not told if she desired to remain with the nuns of that place. We should fancy not, for Jeanne's enthusiastic mind was of much too

active a nature to render her content with the devout indolence of a conventual life.

Jeanne's friends, more especially Alençon, represented to her in strong terms how much her country needed her services, and reminded her that she had always declared that the command of God was to drive the English out of the land; and though she had done much, that object was very far from being accomplished. She was at length prevailed with to join the King's retinue and go with him to the south; yet, though she complied, she reproached herself afterwards for having disobeyed her voices.

The return to the Loire commenced on the 13th of September. But all was now changed. Of the fine army which, under the auspices of Jeanne, had conducted Charles to Rheims with so much courage and success, there remained but a disorganized remnant. The men, disappointed of a great enterprise, and turned away from the hope of gaining Paris, gave themselves up to insubordination, pillage, and desertion. De Cagni, who was with them, says 'that they marched on more like an army that was beaten than one worthy the name of soldiers.'[1]

[1] *Mémoirs de Pucelle; Mémoires de Richemont; Histoire de France;* Barante.

CHAPTER XI.

Burgundy superior to Charles—Bedford goes to Paris—Alençon raises an Army—requests Charles to let him have the Aid of the Maid —refused—La Trémoille obtains her Assistance for D'Albret—Jeanne's Heroism before the Walls of Le Montier—her Danger —goes to the Siege of La Charité—the Expedition fails—Great Honours shown to the Maid at Bourges—her Exemplary Conduct—the Impostor Catherine—Spirit of Loyalty called up by Jeanne—Beaufort brings over to France the Child Henry—Burgundy's Policy—his Marriage with Isabella of Portugal—Magnificent Welcome to her—Order of the Golden Fleece—the King at Sulli—Jeanne departs with D'Aulon and her Followers unknown to the King—Once more assumes Arms—takes the Ruffian Franquet—his Execution—goes to the Relief of Compiègne —Prediction made by herself in the Church—the Last Scenes of her Heroism—she is captured by the Burgundians.

ON the 21st of September, Charles with his retinue passed the Loire, and his disorderly troops dispersed. Whilst at Gien, he and the Archbishop of Rheims entertained anew their scheme of an accommodation with Burgundy. But the Duke, who evidently felt his own superiority in power, ability, and politics, played with their overtures so adroitly, that, whilst making preparations to renew the war in the north, he made Charles believe he was about to visit Paris in order to forward a truce that would lead to a

desirable settlement of all his affairs. At last it was arranged that this truce, which was to do so much, should only last till the Easter of the next year, 1430.

In the interval, Bedford hastened to Paris to meet Burgundy, but found himself so little popular, that the citizens required him to give up the Regency to the latter. He consented, reserving for himself, however, the government of Normandy. With that far-seeing policy for which Bedford was famed, he offered the Duke the investiture of Champagne. The possession of a province so desirable for its neighbourhood to Burgundy and the Low Countries, was eagerly accepted; and in requital, a promise was given once more to aid the English at the expiration of the truce.[1]

So ended the plan of Charles and his sagacious counsellors. Paris had been spared, when in the very grasp of the French, with a view to patch up a truce which held out but slight prospect of leading to a peace. Even the truce thus brought about was one but in name: for the English lost no opportunity of falling on the French; and the French, who still held several towns, fought, burnt, and ravaged the country in the possession of the English; and Bedford found leisure to send troops and reconquer most of the strongholds which the skill and courage of La Hire had won in Normandy.[2]

At this time the Duke D'Alençon was in his lordship

[1] Barante, *L'Histoire de France.*

[2] Monstrelet; Barante; *History of France.*

of Anjou; and seeing how the weakness of the King was ruining the kingdom, he resolved, if possible, at least to save for him Normandy; and to assist this purpose, he raised troops wherever he could get them. Confident that, could he but have the Maid with him, thousands would flock to her standard, he went in person to the King and entreated him to allow Jeanne to serve with the army he was about to lead against the enemies of his kingdom. But the jealous wretches who, under the name of counsellors, set themselves to thwart all attempts that might be made to retrieve her credit after the disaster of Paris, prevailed with Charles to give a peremptory denial to Alençon's request. The Maid and Alençon were equally disappointed; they met but to bid farewell, and they never met again.

The life of inaction to which Jeanne was now compelled became burdensome to a spirit like hers. But it so happened that soon after, a brother-in-law of La Trémoille, the Lord D'Albret, who held the appointment of the King's Lieutenant in Berri, found himself greatly disquieted by the garrison of an English fortress on the upper course of the Loire. He by no means liked the idea of attacking it without support. It occurred to him, therefore, that here was an occasion where the services of the Maid might be useful, and he made known his wishes to La Trémoille. A word from the favourite procured the King's consent that she should assist his relative; but it was with great reluctance that Jeanne went forth with

D'Albret, after her aid had been refused to the Duke D'Alençon. She mounted her horse, however, and caused her standard to be borne before her.

The garrison of St. Pierre-le-Montier being numerous, the first assault of the French was repulsed with far more vigour than D'Albret expected; the assailants were compelled to draw back, and some to fly. The Maid dismounted, and with a few of her men kept her station unmoved, on the edge of the moat beneath the walls. 'Jeanne,' cried one of them, 'leave the spot! you will become a mark for the enemy; come away, you are alone!' 'I am not alone,' she answered; and taking off her helmet, whilst the hostile missiles from the ramparts were falling around her, she turned her noble countenance towards the fugitives, and exclaimed, as she looked upwards, 'There are with me fifty thousand of those who guard me: I am not alone! I shall not move hence till I have the fortress. Go, every one of you, collect faggots, hurdles, wood, anything; bridge the moat, and pass over!' The men, animated by her inspired looks and her enthusiasm, fancied that she really had a spiritual band, visible only to herself, in attendance upon her. They obeyed her commands, gathered faggots, filled the moat, passed over, escaladed the walls, and won the fortress.[1] In despite of themselves, the envious were obliged to give some commendation to this exploit; and it induced Jeanne once more to press Charles to let her go and join Alençon,

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 220.

where she might render more essential service; but, as before, he refused her request.

Soon after, she was despatched with the same Lord D'Albret to beleaguer a town and fortress of some strength, La Charité. But from the smallness of the force to be sent on the expedition, and the insufficient supply of all the munitions of war, and even of food and clothes, the men were obliged to retreat, and leave the fortress unsubdued. It was suspected at the time that La Trémoille had purposely contrived the failure of the enterprise, in order to disgrace Jeanne in the opinion of the King, with whom of late she seemed to be regaining favour. It is impossible to determine if this suspicion were true or false, so much of falsehood and mystery marked the conduct of La Trémoille as long as he remained the chief favourite with his master.

Be this as it may, Charles retained the Maid that winter at Bourges, where he kept his Court, and where, in spite of envy and jealousy, she was held in much honour. In the December of the same year, 1429, Charles issued the patent of nobility for herself, her family, and descendants. He also gave her a robe of cloth of gold, no doubt intended as its accompaniment, and suited to the rank he had legally bestowed upon her. It would have been interesting to know something of Jeanne's Court life, but little has come down to us. It is not improbable that the care taken to lodge her worthily, with the wife of one of the Queen's gentlemen, might have been suggested

by the Dowager Duchess Yolande, who had always been a friend to Jeanne. She was a princess of superior mind, a great observer, and quick in detecting an evil spirit in many who pretended to be good and loyal, and was ever desirous to bring forward the really good, who, either by their own modesty, or by the misrepresentation of others, were not truly known by Charles. A striking instance of this we have seen in Yolande's interference on behalf of the Constable Richmond. She was also a religious woman, and must have been pleased with Jeanne's ardour in the service of God: for whilst at Bourges the Maid never failed attending the services of the Church with her accustomed reverence; and, at all hours, delighted to wander through the aisles of the fine old cathedral, whose rich windows, pictured with saints and angels, had for her an indescribable charm.

The poor ignorant people, and some who ought to have known better, fancied that Jeanne's powers were altogether supernatural, and begged her to touch little crosses and images, that they might wear them as guards against injury or evil spirits. The Maid discouraged this folly, assuring those who so solicited her that her touch was no better than their own for such purposes; and when some silly person said that he felt sure she could never be killed in battle, she replied, 'Have I not been wounded? My life is no more secure from death than that of any one who goes into action.'

We have before stated that, at her request, her native

village was freed from all taxes. Now that the patent of nobility was signed by the King, she received with it the first instalment of a handsome income granted to her with her new rank. This she was liberal in spending for the benefit of the poor, and in religious offerings. She frequently visited the sick, and often prayed by the side of the wounded and the dying.[1]

A little trait of thoughtful kindness shows how good was her natural disposition. In her prosperity she remembered the artist who painted for her the design she had assumed for her white silk standard, that had so often been borne before her to victory. She made her secretary write a letter to the magistrates of the town where he lived, begging them, for her sake, to make a dower present to his young daughter; probably she knew that the artist was too poor to portion his child.

It seemed to be the will of Providence, that at the time Jeanne's highest honours were bestowed upon her, she was to be exposed to vexations that most nearly touched her. An impostor sprang up, encouraged by her enemies for the sole purpose of lessening the meritorious pretensions of the Maid. The impostor's name was Catherine de La Rochelle. She found her way to the King, and told him that every night a figure in white appeared before her, and instructed her where to find hidden treasures; that she could discover gold and silver enough to pay any army Jeanne might raise. She

[1] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

was introduced to the Maid, whose natural shrewdness soon detected Catherine's imposition, to the annoyance of Brother Richard, the famous preaching friar, who patronized her. The brain of this eccentric cordelier was turned by his restless desire for notoriety; and he fancied that if he could get Jeanne and Catherine to act in conjunction, he could direct and rule over both. He was mistaken. With the truly honest servant of God he could do nothing; the false one he managed to his satisfaction. But Jeanne exposed the deceit of the whole transaction, and Catherine was discountenanced at Court.[1]

The spirit of loyalty which Jeanne had called up in France could not be extinguished by all the efforts of the enemy, and many cities and towns returned to the obedience of their legitimate sovereign. In Paris, what was called a conspiracy in his favour was unfortunately discovered, and more than a hundred persons suffered by torture, drowning, and beheading. Bedford, seeing that a reaction for a French king was gaining ground, resolved on a great effort to overcome it, and secure the crown for England. It was decided that Cardinal Beaufort should bring over seas the little Henry VI., to make him known in France. Accordingly he landed at Calais with a vast retinue; and in this goodly company came Peter Cauchon, that disreputable bishop who had been driven from his diocese by the people of Beauvais. Henry, the Cardinal, and their suite, were installed in

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 222.

the fortress of Rouen, on the banks of the Seine, built by Henry v. to overawe the city after the battle of Agincourt.

The Duke of Burgundy now resolved to keep faith with Bedford, and therefore broke it with Charles; it was for his own interest, however, more than for Bedford's, that he did so. He desired to obtain possession of an important town, Compiègne, as it would give him the absolute control over the Oise. Some time before this, Charles would have given up the town to him, but the inhabitants refused their consent. The Duke then offered to buy it of the governor, Sir William de Flavi, a brave captain, but a monster of depravity and cruelty, who had committed the most horrible crimes. De Flavi replied that the town did not belong to him, and he guarded it for the King of France. Philip resolved to have the place at any cost: he therefore threatened it, and, as we have seen, would not renew with Charles any terms of truce. But before we come to what will be the most disastrous event in our story, we must pause to say a few words about the Duke who occasioned it.

Philip, Duke of Burgundy, was certainly one of the most remarkable men of his time. He was thrice married. His first wife, sister to Charles VII., died of a broken heart at the spectacle of quarrel and bloodshed between the land of her birth and that of her marriage. The second was Bona of Artois, widow of the Count de Nevers, who fell at Agincourt. The third

was Isabella, daughter to the King of Portugal. This last union, which took place in the year of which we are now treating, 1430, he determined to celebrate with a magnificence greater than had yet been observed by any prince in Europe. Philip was a man whose natural endowments would have rendered him conspicuous in almost any station of life, but in a prince they made him glorious. He was well educated, deep-thinking, observing, steady in the pursuit of his object, and never leaving to others any affair of moment that he could conduct himself. Far beyond his age in his appreciation of literature and the fine arts, he encouraged both, and under his auspices they made considerable progress. Monstrelet he appointed as his secretary, solely on account of the merit he displayed in his writings. In some degree this was an injury to him as an historian; for in all his chronicles written after his appointment we see the Burgundian leaning. Philip also patronized that truly wonderful painter Van Eyck, and sent him over to Portugal to paint for him the portrait of his bride elect.

In the fine old city of Bruges, Philip was espoused to Isabella. Monstrelet has given some account of the ceremony. He tells us that the principal streets were hung with rich cloths and the finest tapestry of the Netherlands; that the dresses of the great ladies (the Duchesses of Bedford and Cleves were of the number), of their attendants and horses, were very costly, and

that every succeeding day for eight days they appeared in different liveries, and when the Duchess of Cleves entered the town, 'one hundred and sixty-four trumpets, which sounded very melodiously,' went forth to bid her welcome. The feast was magnificent, with 'representations of *Unicorns* and other beasts, from whose mouths flowed wines and rose-water, and choice liquors for the entertainment of the guests.' Tilting, music, dancing, pageants, and various other amusements, in which nobles, knights, and esquires of renown distinguished themselves, were continued for nearly a month. And this feast, adds the historical secretary, 'cost the Duke immense sums of money.'[1]

Philip in everything consulted policy. By spending these 'immense sums' in the great commercial cities of Flanders, he secured to himself the goodwill, and in time of need the purses, of the wealthy citizens. He also knew well how much an organized society on a principle of honour common to all binds men together, and renders them faithful and energetic. He had seen the effects of the Order of the Garter on the English; so in the midst of the splendour and rejoicings of nobles, burgesses, and people, he determined to institute an order which should serve him, as well as the English one had served Edward III.

The Order designed by Burgundy was to be in honour of God and St. Andrew: to consist of the Duke as chief,

[1] Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 327.

and thirty-one members, each to be without reproach, and a gentleman of four generations, and each to swear on admission to serve faithfully the chief, to reveal to him whatever he knew that might be injurious to their Order, and to maintain that Order with due splendour. On the decease of a member, his heirs were bound to deliver up his insignia to the Duke, that he might bestow it on some other worthy gentleman. Each knight was to wear a collar wrought with the Duke's device, and a golden fleece suspended therefrom in front,—'similar,' says Monstrelet, 'to what Jason conquered in olden times, as it is written in the *History of Troy*, and which no Christian prince had ever before used. The Duke therefore called this the ORDER OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE.'[1]

To return to Charles. Under the influence of the evil genius his master, he was amusing himself in indolent pleasure at the château of La Trémoille at Sulli, on the Loire, when the news came of the danger that threatened Compiègne from the combined forces of the English and Burgundians. Charles heard it unmoved. But not so Jeanne, who was still at Bourges. Whether she saw the King during his residence at Sulli, or whether she experienced any new marks of the malice of the favourite, we know not. But certain it is, she had felt deeply hurt that notwithstanding her eminent services, Charles had

[1] Jean de Troyes, vol. viii. p. 176; Barante, vol. vi. p. 38; Monstrelet, vol. vi. p. 238.

permitted the fanatic friar to bring forward an impudent impostor, and place her in competition with the deliverer of Orleans. Jeanne was humble in all that immediately referred to herself; but of all that referred to her as the emissary of God, she was sensitive and tenacious in an extreme degree. The King was the idol of her enthusiastic loyalty; and the least slight from him, or countenanced by him from any quarter, was almost more than she could bear.

At this period she became distressed, and complained of the restraint laid upon her when so much of France was still suffering from the thraldom of the English and the threats of the Burgundians. What we have now to relate is a portion of Jeanne's history over which hangs a veil of obscurity. Contemporaries have told us the facts, but have thrown no light on the motives.

The King was still at Sulli with his favourite counsellor, and it was said that Jeanne pronounced some plans which they were considering to be unavailing for the recovery of France. If this were so, most likely she thought of the fruitlessness of the fifteen days' truce. But it is vain to conjecture what might have been her motive. What we know for certain is no more than this,—that, attended by the faithful John D'Aulon, now her standard-bearer, and a few brave men devoted to her service, one morning in the month of April 1430, she mounted her horse and set off without taking leave of the King, or making known to him her purpose, and went to Lagni-sur-Marne, some persons of that

town having fought bravely at the attempted assault on Paris. At this time her voices, she said, gave her warnings, but no encouragement: 'Jeanne, you will be taken soon; it must be so. Do not be surprised; bear all patiently. God will be your support.' Before, however, this presage was realized, Jeanne was once more signally victorious. A man named Franquet, who had been guilty of murder and almost every other crime, to save himself from justice joined a party of Anglo-Burgundians, and by his deeds of cruelty and hardihood became the terror of the neighbourhood. Jeanne mounted her horse, and attended by her little band of followers, with some men from Lagni, set off in pursuit of the ruffian. A fierce encounter ensued, in which Franquet was beaten and made prisoner. Jeanne wished to exchange him for a French prisoner in whom she felt interested. But the magistrates of Lagni claimed him as a criminal under the civil law, and his head was struck off. This circumstance not long after was brought as a charge against her, and most unjustly did Monstrelet state that Jeanne ordered his execution.[1]

The Maid now learned that the Duke of Burgundy was successfully attacking the fortresses around Compiègne, and that with his chief captain, John de Luxembourg, he had fixed his camp before that town on the side of Beauvais. Thither Jeanne hastened, in the hope to assist her distressed countrymen. She was gladly received by Sir William de Flavi, who was still governor, and by the

[1] Monstrelet.

citizens. How many days she remained there before her capture we do not know. Her voices, she said, gave her now daily warning of what was about to happen, and a tradition respecting her at this period is too remarkable to be passed unnoticed.

Long after her death, in the year 1498, two old men of Compiègne—the one being ninety-eight, and the other eighty-six years of age—said that they were in the Church of St. Jacques in the year 1430, when Jeanne, called the Maid, came there to attend the mass, confession, and the Eucharist. After the service she retired to one of the pillars, and spoke to several inhabitants of the town who remained in the church. Among them were more than a hundred children, desirous from curiosity to look at her. She seemed melancholy, and they heard her say, 'My children, and my dear friends, I tell you that I have been sold and betrayed; and I shall be put to death. If you are about to supplicate, pray to God for me, for I shall never more have the power to serve the King or the kingdom of France.'[1]

The governor proposed a sortie of the garrison, and Jeanne did her utmost to render it effective. More troops were wanted, and at considerable risk she left the town for Cressy, where she readily obtained a reinforcement of about four hundred men, and returned with them to

[1] From *Le Merouer des Femmes Vertueuses*, a book published in the time of Louis XII., and quoted by Henri Martin. Hollingshed, p. 104; Barante, vol. iii. p. 375.

'her good friends in Compiègne.' She arrived at sunrise on the morning of the 23d of May. Everything was then finally arranged with the governor respecting the sortié; the intention being to surprise the enemy, who were believed to be unprepared for action. Jeanne's company of a few brave and devoted men, and a select number of the troops of the garrison, were to form the sallying party. Among them was one of the Maid's own brothers, now under the King's patent a nobleman, and a captain in her band. Her gallant esquire, John D'Aulon, bore her standard; and Pothon, an intrepid Burgundian knight, faithful to Charles and devoted to Jeanne, was with her. The sortie was made from the gate facing the bridge of the river Aisne. It commenced at five o'clock in the afternoon. The whole of the troops crossed to the opposite side unmolested. Most unexpectedly, they came upon the quarters of the Lord of Noyelles, at the moment when John de Luxembourg and several knights were reconnoitring the town. An encounter fierce and determined instantly ensued. At the first the French, more in number than their opponents, had the best of it. John of Luxembourg fought bravely to maintain his ground, and the cry and rush of the contest soon brought a reinforcement of the English to his aid. Now the French were vastly outnumbered, and compelled at length to a hasty retreat.

The Maid never showed herself more heroic than in

those moments of imminent danger, and Pothon, the Burgundian, 'did prodigies of valour in her defence.'[1] The details of the battle are long and complicated; we give but the leading events. Twice did Jeanne rally the troops, and induce them to return to the contest. The unflinching companions of her toil kept close around her, in the hope to save a life to each man dearer than his own; but when they saw how they were outnumbered, and that all chance of safety was over, they cried, 'Jeanne, Jeanne, lose not a moment; regain the town, or you and we are lost!'

Jeanne's forebodings were all forgotten in the enthusiasm of the strife; her spirit rose with the danger that surrounded her. 'Say not so,' she cried; 'it belongs but to you to discomfit the foe; think of nothing, but fall upon him.' They would not, even by her daring example, be persuaded to a fresh attack; they seized therefore Jeanne's horse by the bridle, and forced her to turn towards the town. Victory was no longer possible; the French were overwhelmed.

But seeing that defeat was inevitable, Jeanne made a rush to the rear in order to cover the retreat of the fugitives, or all to a man would have been cut off; but the soldiers thought only of themselves, pressed forward pell mell, crossed the bridge, got within the gates, and closed them.

The Maid was shut out!

[1] Barante.

Only the few, the very few of her devoted band were with her; she was surrounded, but defended herself bravely with the sword she had taken from a soldier at the battle near Lagni. The Burgundians knew her by her standard still borne by her side; knew her by the crimson and gold surcoat that she wore. They rushed forward in a body, every man anxious to seize her. The standard of her who had saved Orleans, which had led the King of France to his coronation at Rheims, and had been borne by her to the altar at the sacred rite of the anointing,—that standard fell to the ground, as the last of her brave followers were either slain or forced from her side in the press of the contest.

Five or six of the enemy rushed upon the Maid, each exclaiming: 'Yield to me—pledge your faith to me!'

'I have sworn,' she replied, 'and have given my faith to another than you, and I will keep my oath.' As she spoke, an archer of Picardy came behind, seized her by the surcoat, and dragged her off her horse. She fell to the ground. Exhausted by her almost superhuman efforts, she at last yielded to Lionel, the Bastard of Vendôme. She was instantly taken to the quarter of John de Luxembourg. John D'Aulon was likewise a prisoner. The news of her capture flew through camp and field, and the enemy triumphed with unspeakable delight. Monstrelet says: 'The English were rejoiced, and more pleased than if they had taken five hundred combatants, for they dreaded no other leader or captain so

much as they had hitherto feared the Maid. One would have thought that all France was won.'

The English rushed in a crowd to see her. The Duke of Burgundy also came to satisfy his curiosity, and spoke to her in a manner so agitated, that he seemed hardly to know what he said. Monstrelet came likewise to look at her. He says, though he was present, he did not remember what passed. Possibly the secretary's memory was affected by having that night so much to do; for Burgundy caused letters to be written, and instantly despatched to Paris, to England, and all the principal towns under his rule, to announce the great news—the Maid was a captive! When the Regent Bedford received the account, he was seized with a fit of piety; and ordered the *Te Deum* of thankfulness to be sung with the greatest solemnity in all the churches of Paris and elsewhere.[1]

[1] Monstrelet; *Mémoires de la Pucelle;* Barante; Henri Martin; *Précis de L'Histoire; History of France; Dictionnaire Historique.*

CHAPTER XII.

Distress of the People of Orleans and Tours on the Capture of the Maid —Charles makes no Effort for her Release—Jeanne sent to Beaulieu—the Lord John of Luxembourg sells her to the English—her Death resolved upon—Cauchon Bishop of Beauvais—she is removed to Beaurevoir—wins the Love of the Ladies—her Reasons for refusing to change her Male Attire—her strong Temptation—she leaps down from the Castle Tower—supposed to be killed—removed to Crotoi—Hatred of the English and Jealousy of the French—University of Paris decide she is to be tried for Sorcery—the Trial to be at Rouen—Jeanne at Crotoi—her Person described by Contemporary Witnesses—the Boy Henry—Bedford and Beaufort at Rouen—L'Oiseleur sent to lead Jeanne to betray herself—her Prison Sufferings—Preparations for her Trial—Authority for the Particulars of the same.

TRUE and fatal had been the warning of Jeanne's voices. The heroism of action was passed; the heroism of suffering was to begin; and in that, if possible, she proved greater than before. The enemy rejoiced. The good Duke of Burgundy, as he was called (though his goodness generally took the line of his own interest), was gratified by having conquered a noble enemy who had hitherto been unconquerable. But it was sad news for every true French heart. At first it was not credited: the people refused to believe

anything so calamitous as the loss of the liberator of Orleans, who, had she been left to follow up her victories according to her own views, would probably ere this have been the liberator of all France.

The people of Orleans, Blois, Chinon, Tours, where Jeanne was known and esteemed, not merely for her prowess in the field, but for her many gracious qualities, were so distressed, that at Tours the priests, carrying the relics of the apostle of the Gauls, made a solemn procession through the streets with bare heads and naked feet, chanting the *Miserere*.

But how did the man who, not long before, was about to fly into Spain or into Scotland to save his very life, when the Maid came to him at Chinon as the envoy of God, to deliver him and his kingdom,—how did Charles act on learning this calamity? Would it not have been expected that he would have called up the chivalry of France, headed that brave band, and, at the risk of his crown and his life, have attempted her deliverance? Or, if his spirit quailed at the chance of arms, that he would have sent envoy after envoy, and have offered all the treasure he possessed, even to the half of his kingdom, as a ransom to redeem the heroic maid to whom he owed so much? But Charles, the ignoble Charles, did nothing. We sicken as we turn away from the thought of a soul so ungrateful, so unmanly. The English and Burgundians detested Jeanne for her victories over them; the envious and jealous for her having outshone them in the path of

loyalty and honour: all these joined in one chorus of hatred for her destruction. The Archbishop of Rheims led the way. He wrote to that city, and informed the inhabitants that Jeanne was a prisoner. It was, he considered, a punishment for her pride: she had followed her own counsel instead of that of God, and had clothed herself in costly garments. But her loss, he assured the good people, was of no importance, as there was a shepherd-boy from the mountains of Gévaudan, who bore upon his body the five wounds, like St. Francis, and who had been sent to the King at the command of God, to go out and conquer with the army. As we shall presently see, nothing but contempt came of this endeavour to set up a half idiot boy in rivalry to the pretensions of Jeanne.

The capture of the Maid saved La Trémoille and his confederates some trouble. They had been plotting to thwart Alençon. They knew that the rank and power of the Duke was such, that it must at last have weight with the King. They knew that Alençon, desirous to associate Jeanne with himself for the deliverance of France, was determined to carry his point, though on his first application Charles had refused to allow him her services. The possibility of that union was now over.

To return to the Maid. She was at first placed by her captor in the hands of his master, the Lord John of Luxembourg, who sent her to the Château of Beaulieu, near Noyon. On the 26th May (the day after the great news that caused the *Te Deum* to be sung in Paris) the

Vicar-General of the Grand Inquisitor of France wrote to the Duke of Burgundy, desiring to have sent to him forthwith as a prisoner the woman called *The Maid*, who was suspected of many crimes of the nature of heresy, that before a competent tribunal, assisted by the University of Paris, she might be made to answer for the same. The Duke of Burgundy, however, was too well aware of the value of the prize he had gained, to let it slip from him so easily. He gave no answer; and the Vicar and the University continued to trouble him without effect. But more powerful foes than the theologians were anxious for her destruction.

Bedford the Regent and Cardinal Beaufort had motives both personal and political for desiring it. But these men, as well as Burgundy, were aware that so great was the celebrity of Jeanne, not only in France, but in all Europe, that what they did must wear the mask of justice, to conceal the dark countenance of hatred that lurked beneath. It would never do to take a prisoner of war—for such was Jeanne—and put her to death, when her only offence had been that of having taken up arms for her King and her country. They must let the Church deal with her on the score of heresy and sorcery. But then, to give her up at once to such spiritual fathers as the Inquisitor-General and the Doctors of the University, would be to lose all chance of the good terms first to be secured for themselves. Burgundy, Bedford, and Beaufort laid their heads together, and consulted how best to bring

about the desired conclusion—their own profit by Jeanne's death. It would be profitless to recount the fictions they got up, the manœuvres they had recourse to, the various inducements they held out to secure clever agents in helping to carry out their purpose. One item in their process was never forgotten, the root of all evil—the money part of the account. Jeanne was worth a good price; and they took care to secure the best that could be got.

Philip Duke of Burgundy, on the death of the Duke of Brabant, possessed himself of all Flanders (there was a doubt about the legality of his claim), and he was most anxious to please the people of those countries by facilitating their commerce with England, that the gorgeous works from their looms might have a sale in London and elsewhere without let or hindrance. He proposed therefore a treaty for this object, and Bedford and Beaufort consented to it, on the understanding that, in acknowledgment of the favour, Burgundy gave up to them all his claim on the prisoner Jeanne.

Then John of Luxembourg, a vassal of Burgundy, put in his claim for a share in the prize; and after some haggling, Bedford and Beaufort consented that England should pay to Luxembourg ten thousand livres as the price of his prisoner. These points settled, the next thing to be considered was, how to compass her death without bringing shame and dishonour on themselves for ever. They decided that this could alone be done by the Church. An ecclesiastic of some notoriety must be found to take the

lead in the business, and the rest would follow without difficulty. There was at hand a most ready tool, willing to be used towards shaping out whatever course was needed—Peter Cauchon, that Bishop of Beauvais who had been turned out of his diocese, by general consent, for his scandalous vices.

This man had some learning, a large share of malice and cunning, and was subtle and flexible in the service of those who could serve him. The See of the Archbishop of Rouen was vacant; and what more easy than for Beaufort to request His Holiness to institute Cauchon? The Cardinal promised to do so. All was arranged; and Cauchon, in gratitude for favours to come, at once claimed Jeanne the Maid, as having been taken prisoner within his jurisdiction. He wrote with all due formality, to set forth his claim in order to bring her to trial as a woman 'strongly suspected of sortilege, idolatry, invocation to devils, and many heresies; and having as a sorceress obtained by infernal agency the power to delude men, and occasion bloodshed and misery in the realm of Henry King of England and of France.'

The Maid was formally surrendered up to ecclesiastical power, and Cauchon set to work for the purpose of searching out or inventing her offences against religion and the Church; and arranged to have the assistance of the Vicar-General of the Inquisition of Paris, and of such learned doctors as might be required in a case of so much importance.

We have very briefly stated these matters, but months were consumed in the negotiations attending them. We now turn to the unfortunate Maid, in order to mention some circumstances that occurred on her capture, and during the time her enemies were plotting her destruction.

She was, as we stated, at first placed in the Castle of Beaulieu, where she excited so much compassion, that it was strongly suspected that the slight manner in which she was guarded was with a view to give her a chance of escape. The attempt was made; but, unfortunately, she was recognised by the porter at the gate. John of Luxembourg then removed her to Beaurevoir, a castle situated in a wood between St. Quintin and Cambrai. Here she was held in honourable captivity; and so much sympathy did her gentleness, patience, and religious trust awaken in the hearts of two most amiable women, the aunt and the wife of John of Luxembourg, that they vied with each other in showing her kindness.

These ladies, knowing that the enemies of the Maid had laid great stress on the impropriety of her wearing men's clothes, brought her female attire, and most earnestly pressed her to adopt it. But she refused, saying 'that, without the leave of her Lord, she dared not—she had put on a masculine habit by order from above.' Such was still the confidence she placed in her voices. These ladies were much attached to her, and when it became known to them that Peter Cauchon had claimed her, in order to bring her to trial, they were struck with dread.

The old Countess threw herself on her knees to implore her nephew not to cast an ineffaceable blot on the imperial escutcheon of the royal house of Luxembourg, by giving up the heroic Maid to her enemies. She pleaded in vain —it was too late. Judas-like, Luxembourg had agreed upon the price for the victim—the pact was made and could not be recalled.

Jeanne, consoled by the affectionate kindness of these excellent women, who were permitted to see her, had hitherto borne her calamity with patience, not unmixed with hope; for her voices, she said, constantly encouraged her in prison. We know not how, but whilst there she learnt that Compiègne was still closely besieged by the Duke of Burgundy. She longed to be at liberty to assist 'her good friends in the beleaguered city,' when suddenly the news reached her that John of Luxembourg had sold her to the English, and that all in Compiègne, even the children, would be put to the sword when the town was taken.[1]

A paroxysm of grief seized her. So prolonged was the agony of her mind, that her reason seemed upset. Only two ideas possessed her,—she was sold to the English, and all her friends in Compiègne would be murdered. She was allowed to walk, for the benefit of the air, on the platform at the summit of the tower in which she was confined. The thought rushed upon her, as she looked down from that height, that could she but escape being

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 243.

given up to the English, she might go to the succour of Compiègne. It was but to plunge down; but then, 'was it not to tempt God and seek death?' 'Bear all with patience,' said her voices; 'God will save those in Compiègne.'

For the first time Jeanne mistrusted the assurance thus given, and the temptation remained strong upon her. She struggled against it for some days; but still she returned to the summit of the tower, and looked down,—there was a fascination in it. Only the air between herself and the ground beneath; that air peopled by the invisible spirits both of good and evil—angels who guard, and demons who tempt. She looked again and again; the temptation was too strong to be longer resisted. She uttered a wild prayer of desperation to God and the Virgin, and plunged down! She was found insensible at the base of the tower. At first it was supposed she was killed. When brought to herself, some expressions of despair escaped her; but though the whole nervous system was so shaken that for some days she could not take food, no bones were fractured, nor had she sustained any permanent injury.[1] Her voices, she declared, reproved her: 'Confess, ask pardon of God; without fail, those in Compiègne will be saved before the winter.'[2]

[1] The tower and the château no longer exist, but it is conjectured, judging by what is known of buildings of the same kind and period, that the tower could not have been less than sixty feet from the summit to the ground.

[2] *Mémoires de la Pucelle.*

For a time she was consigned to the care of the ladies who were so much her friends; and when, soon after her recovery, she was removed to the Burgundian territory, they parted from her with tears and prayers for her safety. She was carried to Arras, and so on to Crotoi, and there placed in charge of the officials of the English. Her fate was sealed. But though again held in strict captivity, she was not altogether without consolation. Her voices, she said, did not desert her; and she learnt that Compiègne was saved. Formidable succours had arrived without the walls, when all within them—garrison, inhabitants, men, and even women—sallied out, and the siege was raised.[1]

But the discomfiture of the English and Burgundians was a thing of no benefit to Jeanne, except so far as her own wishes were concerned; it did but embitter the feelings of vindictive enemies towards the poor prisoner of Crotoi. They found that the patriotic impetus which her spirit and deeds had given to the people to renew the struggle again and again, till the last foreigner should be driven out of the land, had survived her power to direct it. The English archers, who hated crossing the seas, even to be victorious in France, and who were amongst the most superstitious of the age, took up a new idea that was most fatal to her at this crisis. They fancied there was a demoniacal pact or charm annexed to the life of the Maid; and that as long as she

[1] Barante, vol. iii. p. 387.

lived, no matter how deep down the dungeon might be in which she breathed, no serious enterprise could succeed with the English. They literally thirsted for her blood.

The University of Paris, possibly wishing to display the learning of its members in matters of heresy and witchcraft, became impatient to commence operations against Jeanne, and to have the session for her trial held in the capital: For this purpose they addressed the council of King Henry, begging that Bishop Cauchon might be compelled to make more haste in getting up the evidence and the preliminaries of the charges under his direction. But the Regent and Cardinal Beaufort did not feel quite sure that the spirit of the people of Paris was as adverse as they could wish towards Jeanne; so it was resolved to have her brought to Rouen, and there tried.

Whilst she was at Crotoi, for a long time there was no pitying eye to look upon her, no friendly companion of her own sex to cheer her solitude. She was not, however, treated with severity. Before her departure, some ladies of the neighbourhood, anxious to see the far-famed Jeanne, came in a boat down the river Somme to visit her. The governor permitted the interview; when, touched by her misfortunes, they left her in tears, charmed with the beauty of her countenance, and her melancholy but pleasing discourse. Few of Jeanne's contemporaries notice her person; but the Lord de Laval compared her to 'a divine creature;' and her Esquire D'Aulon (taken prisoner when she was,

and for a time allowed to attend upon her at Beaulieu), many years after, when required to give evidence concerning the Maid, said 'that she was tall, beautiful, and well formed, of a most pure and good life, and was the most devout woman he had ever known.'

At Crotoi, Jeanne had the consolation of being allowed to attend the daily mass performed by a priest, who, like herself, was a prisoner. From the grated windows of her chamber she could look out and watch the stormy ocean, whose turbulent waves beat so close on the walls, that, since her day of sorrow, the castle has been destroyed by the sands and the encroaching tide. But when removed to Rouen, even the little alleviation which she derived from contemplating one of the vast elements of nature was exchanged for a prison-house of horror. From the moment that the clanking of those bolts and bars sounded in her ears, till the hour of her fiery death on the pile, suffering, and only suffering, was to be her portion. The cup of martyrdom was bitter, she drank it to the dregs. At Rouen she was at first placed in a cage of iron, with a chain round her neck, hands, and feet; insult was added to ignominy.

Rouen, the capital of Normandy at that time, was the residence of the child King Henry. There he was surrounded by a numerous Court, guarded by a strong body of men, whose captains were selected from the chivalry of England, and Bedford and Beaufort were with him. They had chosen that ancient and noble city as the most con-

spicuous stage they could find on which to present the great drama of their iniquity. 'So commenced,' says the French historian, 'the long agony of the child of God,'—the name which she said her voices gave her in those moments of her supreme trial. That agony was destined to last five long months. On the 28th December 1430, the Chapter of Rouen 'gave territory and jurisdiction to the Bishop of Beauvais,' in order that he might direct the *procès* of Jeanne in a diocese that was not his own. The Chapter by no means felt disposed to concede this, but they were induced to yield by the express desire of the Cardinal Beaufort and the Council of England.

On the 3d January 1431, an order was sent in the name of Henry, King of England and of France, that the Maid should be given up to the authority of the Bishop of Beauvais, whenever he might require and demand her attendance; and the order concluded by saying, that if nothing was proved against her injurious to the Catholic faith, the King would retain possession of her. Thus were her enemies determined not to let slip their hold: for if acquitted by the Church, they could keep her as a prisoner of war; and if offered a ransom on that score, they could refuse to accept it, and try her as a rebel to King Henry.

The shameful procedure of Cauchon, which we are now about to relate, enabled him to obtain from Jeanne herself whatever he might feel desirous to learn that could in any way be turned against her. Cauchon obtained permission from the Earl of Warwick, then Governor of

Rouen, to allow a canon of the Cathedral, named Nicholas L'Oiseleur, to visit her in prison; for Jeanne was no longer shut up in an iron cage, but chained every night in her bed by both ankles, and in the day by only one to a block of wood.

L'Oiseleur disguised himself in the dress of a respectable layman, and came to Jeanne as such, telling her that, like herself, he was a prisoner for having been attached to the French party. The unfortunate Maid, wholly unsuspicious, fell into the snare; and glad to see any one who came to her as a friend in her desolation, answered without reserve all the questions that were artfully put to her; told all about her voices, etc. But even this did not satisfy the hypocrite; and at last he told her that he was a priest, in the hope to obtain from her in confession all her most secret thoughts and plans, if she had formed any in her misery; and in order that no means of entrapping her in her speech might be left untried, by an ingenious device, whatever passed could be heard by two notaries, who were placed in the adjoining apartment to write down every word she spoke.

We will not enter upon the complicated and iniquitous machinery adopted for her destruction. If the subject were less tragical, it would provoke a smile to think that not less than forty assessors, including the abbots of some of the greatest monasteries in Normandy, and their priors, with numerous doctors of theology from Paris, and licentiates of the civil law, the Vicar of

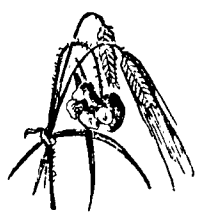
the Grand Inquisitor of France, Cauchon Bishop of Beauvais, and his canons, were thought necessary to question a poor girl, who could not read, and whose only offence was, that, endowed with sense superior to them all, under the providence of God, she had well served her King and country. Of the forty, some were time-servers, looking for preferment, and amongst the best in ability were the worst in character. Others were weak, timid men, who were required to do nothing more than follow the lead of Cauchon and his abettors.

It is necessary to preface the great scene of the *procès* or trial of Joan of Arc, by saying that there is no authority for its details in contemporary chroniclers: there could be none; for although every word that passed was taken down in writing whilst the trial was going on, not a word was suffered to go forth, to make known to the world at large the cruelty of the judges and persecutors, or the innocence of the victim. It remained for the present century, and that by the labours of patriotic and most justly celebrated Frenchmen, to bring to light not only the records of the trial (still fortunately preserved intact), but many other precious documents found in the municipal archives of such great cities as Paris, Rouen, Orleans, Rheims, and others. These documents are witnesses that rise up as it were from the dead, to do full though tardy justice to a noble woman, who was truly one of the best of God's works.

Henri Martin, in his admirable *Histoire de France*, gives

the *procès* at full length from the original records of the court; and we have followed his account as the authority for whatever portions we narrate of that remarkable trial: to give the whole, would extend far beyond our limits. An English writer of great critical acumen[1] has made some remarks on the *procès* of the unfortunate Maid which are so true, that we cannot resist giving them in his own words: 'Let it be remembered, that everything relating to the trial comes from judicial documents drawn up by her accusers. All, therefore, that goes to prove Joan's perfect rectitude of purpose, is certified to us as few things are or can be in any historical inquiry. When the secretary sat in court, and noted down what she said from day to day, he little thought what a monument he was building up to the prisoner's fame.'

[1] The late Rev. J. H. Gurney.



CHAPTER XIII.

Trial in the Chapel of Rouen — the Assessors — the Procurator D'Estivet — independent Conduct of Nicholas Houppeville — Jeanne brought into Court—the Oath proposed to her—Tumult in the Assembly — no Counsel allowed her — Isambard de la Pierre, his Account of the Difficulties thrown in her way—Spirited Answers of Jeanne to the Court—Cauchon adds Seven more to the Assessors—Second Appearance of Jeanne—opens the Proceedings herself—her Account of her Voices—Subtle Questions put to her — her Power of Reply—Cauchon endeavours to embarrass her—her Allegory—her Standard—the Lady Tree—the Rings—the Fairies — disclaims Sorcery — questioned concerning St. Michael—St. Catherine—St. Margaret—Jeanne predicts the Final Victory of Charles — Lohair, the Lawyer, condemns the Proceedings—her Enemies impatient for her Destruction.

THE trial was held in the chapel of the old Castle of Rouen. On the 21st February 1431, D'Estivet, the procurator, took his seat as leader of the session. Cauchon and all his troop of assessors were in their places. The chapel, large, ancient, and ill-lighted, was filled with persons quite in character with the gloom that hung around. Few of them were men likely to feel remorse for any measures, however severe, that might be taken against the accused. Many had spent their lives in ascetic solitude, and had never known the softening

influence of domestic ties or social neighbourhood. There was hardness of heart, as well as hardness of feature, depicted in the countenance of some of the fathers who thought themselves honouring God when they were preparing to give to the stake a poor girl, instead of showing her that mercy which a Divine Providence extends to the sparrow that falls on the ground.

Others, soured by the obstinate controversy which then raged about contending Popes, sat sullenly wrapped in their abbatical robes of velvet and gold,—which, like the whited sepulchre, served to cover over the dead hearts within,—and looked with somewhat of disdain on their inferior brethren who occupied the lower seats. Several of these were pale, withered men, having neither mind nor spirit sufficient to defend the innocent, yet having no wish for violence. 'Nevertheless, trembling before the violent, they became accomplices for fear of becoming victims.'[1]

It is pleasing to find in such a packed assembly (probably to the extreme surprise of Cauchon), without requiring a lantern to look for him, an honest man. After the apparitor had made his report of the citation of Jeanne, and her demand that there should be the same number of French as of English clergy for her judges, one of the Doctors of Theology (for ever honoured be his name), Nicholas Houppeville, rose from his place, and claimed for the accused what she dared not claim for herself—legal justice. He told Cauchon that his *procès* was worth no-

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 253.

thing, that it was altogether invalid; that the enemies of Jeanne could never in common fairness be her judges; that there was no necessity to examine her on points connected with religion, or with her belief in her mission, as she had already been examined on them by the Doctors at Poitiers, and before the Archbishop of Rheims. Houppeville had the independence and the courage to tell Cauchon plainly that he ought to withdraw the suit altogether. He also, by implication, gave the assembled hierarchy to understand that they ought to exercise their authority, and forbid it.

Cauchon's reply to this independent, truthful Doctor was to throw him into prison; and Jeanne's demand for the equal number of French and English clergy was not even considered by the assessors.[1]

Jeanne was brought into court by Jean Massieu, followed by a guard of archers. She was attired in black, but in the ordinary civil suit of a man; and so commenced that scene of injustice and cruelty, which has hardly its parellel, except in sacred history. She was pale, trembling, and so weakened by the confinement of a prison, and the treatment she had experienced since being in Rouen, that she seemed as if scarcely able to support herself; but by a great effort her spirits rallied.

[1] The trial was taken down word for word by the secretary as it proceeded in court, and was afterwards translated into Latin by Thomas De Courcelles, celebrated for his learning and influence at the Council of Basle. See Barante, vol. iv.

The first difficulty raised by the judges to embarrass her was about the oath. The Gospels were produced, and she was required to swear upon them, that she would answer truthfully whatever questions might be put to her. She was startled by this, not knowing what questions might be put to her, and how far she should be free to answer them. All that related to her father and mother, and early life, and all the circumstances of her journey to Chinon, she was quite willing to tell; but as to her revelations from God, made by His saints, she had not told them in every point to any living creature, except the King, and would not, even if they were to cut off her head for refusing. The King might tell them if he pleased, but she would not. After a long and idle debate, they asked her, would she swear to answer on points of faith? To this she consented, and took the oath to do so on bended knees. She was sworn again on the second day; but when they again worried her about her oath on the third, she replied with spirit, 'I have sworn twice already; and I will not swear again. You might lead me to tell what I have sworn never to reveal, and then you would lay the guilt of perjury on my soul; you would not desire that of me.'

We return to the first day.

So fearful was the tumult which arose, that 'one would have thought,' says Henri Martin, 'it was the coming of an angel into an assembly of demons.' All rushed upon her with the war of tongues. A question could not

be answered before another was proposed; and such was the noise and confusion, that no one at last could be heard. It was like the tumult at Ephesus raised by Demetrius the silversmith: 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!'

Jeanne stood alone amongst her enemies, without counsel or friend; and when, after a while, one or two of the assessors tried to make her understand the import of some of the incoherent questions put to her, Cauchon became furious at their offering such assistance, and marked who they were that did so, as objects for his resentment. This scene of disorder lasted, till those who were its authors had tired themselves out, and it seemed as if they wished to wear out the little strength that remained to the Maid.

Isambard de la Pierre, when, twenty-five years after, he gave evidence on the revision of the trial, said 'that the assessors put questions to her of such difficulty, such subtlety, that the greatest clerks would have been perplexed to answer them.' Jeanne, however, retained her equanimity and her patience; and replied sometimes with childlike simplicity, or with the ingenious finesse of her sex, sometimes with the elevation of a devout soul, and never feebly. The strength of her mind supported the weakness of her body, and she showed herself before her judges, as she did in the field of battle, *la fille au grand cœur*. Now and then, though rarely, her memory failed her; but never her presence of mind. The perfect clear-

ness of her statements struck her judges with surprise and admiration, and to such a degree, that some of the old and superstitious among them whispered that her answers must be dictated by supernatural agency. And once, when, in speaking of her heavenly spirits, St. Catherine and St. Margaret, who had been her guides, she added, 'They are here without our seeing them,' these men were possessed by a sense of terror at her words.

When questioned as to whom she owed her knowledge of the Catholic faith, she replied with great simplicity, that her mother had taught her the Paternoster, the Ave, and the Credo, and she had never learnt her faith from any one else. This passed very well; but when Cauchon proceeded, and, according to the formula of the trial, forbade her to leave the prison to which he consigned her, under the penalty of being declared a convicted heretic, the spirit of the heroine of Orleans woke up, and she exclaimed, 'I will not accept your terms. I will not pledge my faith to any one to abide in your prisons: I would leave them if I could; and if you are well informed about me, you would wish me to be out of your hands.' After some hesitation, when further questioned, she asserted with much solemnity of feeling, 'the mysterious greatness of her mission.' That her voices came from God, that she placed faith in them, and had consulted neither bishop, curate, nor any ecclesiastic,—this acknowledgment gave much offence to her interrogator. He next read to her the summons she had sent to the com-

mander of the English before Orleans, demanding that the keys of the cities they had won should be given up to her. She corrected the error made in the copy sent. 'I did not say, Give up the keys of the cities to the Maid; I said, Surrender them to the King.'

A few days after the first examination, Cauchon added seven more to the number of the assessors; and the chapel being found too small to hold the assembly, it was resolved to remove the sittings to the great hall of the Castle, and to place a guard at the entrance, that no one should pass in without permission from the higher powers. A touching incident arose from this change of place for the continuation of the trial. Jeanne was kept in chains till the moment arrived to conduct her into court. In crossing the yard from her prison to the hall, she was obliged to pass the chapel. Gladly would she have entered it, for she ever loved to pray in a holy place; but this indulgence could not be granted. She then implored Jean Massieu, who conducted her, to allow her to kneel at the chapel door to pray. This was allowed for a few minutes; and Massieu, for permitting it, was sharply reprimanded by D'Estivet.

On the 24th of February Jeanne appeared before the assessors, with a dignified and calm deportment that surprised them; and she opened the proceedings herself, by thus addressing the Bishop of Beauvais: 'You say that you are my judge. I bid you beware what you do. You take upon you a great charge. All the clergy in

Rouen and Paris could not condemn me if right were done. Take care what you do, for in truth I am sent by the command of God, and you place yourself in great danger. I have nothing to do here. Leave me to God.'

Though much was drawn from her respecting her voices, yet she did not reply on all points of the subject fully or freely. But when asked, had she heard them of late, she said: 'The voice spoke to me three times yesterday; it speaks to me here in this court. It says, "Reply boldly; be not afraid. God will aid you." The voice speaks to me in my prison; if it did not comfort me there, I should not now be alive. Yet I cannot always hear what it says, for the noise of the prison and of the guards. Ah! I should hear it well if I were in some forest.'

A very subtle question was next put to her: for, had she answered in the affirmative, she would have exposed herself to the danger of being instantly declared a presumptuous heretic; and if in the negative, her condemnation by her own confession would have followed. 'Do you know, Jeanne, if you are in the grace of God?'

'It is a great thing,' she replied, 'to answer such a question.'

'It is a very great thing,' said a monk named Fabri, who was one of the assessors; 'and I do not know that the accused is obliged to answer it.'

'You would do well to be silent,' said Cauchon angrily to Fabri; and he repeated the question, 'Do you, Jeanne, know yourself to be in the grace of God?'

'If I am not, may God bring me into it; if I am, may He keep me in it.'

Her answer confounded the artifice of her subtle interrogator, and so surprised the court, that a pause of silence followed, save that one of the assessors, the Archdeacon of Evreux, as if involuntarily, exclaimed, 'Jeanne, you have answered well!'

She continued: 'I should be the most miserable creature in the world if I knew I was not in the grace of God. If I am in sin, I do not think the voice would come to me. I wish all could understand it as I do.' And, as if inspired, she raised her eyes to heaven.

At the next examination she was pressed to give some account of the spirits who had spoken to her, as great doubts had been expressed on that point.

'If you do not believe me,' she said, 'send to Poitiers. Ask for the copy of my depositions there made. For three weeks I was questioned by clerks of my own party, who found in me nothing but what they thought right.'

'Was it God who bade you adopt the dress of a man?'

'All that I have done has been by the command of my Lord.'

Cauchon continued to worry her about her dress, and forbade her to attend the service of the Mass as long as she wore a man's habit. Jeanne, however, had more than one motive (though she did not tell it in that assembly) for wearing male attire. In an age of great corruption as well as barbarity, she could better protect herself from

insult in such a dress. The next point on which these heartless men fixed to torment her, was the secret of the revelation she had made to the King. But she would not disclose it, and during the whole of her trial she was most careful not to drop a word that could injure any one who had assisted her in the great services she had rendered to Charles. She always said that, from the earliest time of her career, the voices expressed love and reverence for the King. She repeated this in her prison, though it is not possible but she must have felt the unkind neglect she experienced from Charles, more especially when under the influence of La Trémoille, and since her captivity. But she forgave him everything, for there was not a thought of resentment in her generous nature.

During the first sittings, Cauchon had never ceased troubling her about the sign which induced the King to recognise her mission. Harassed by the pertinacity with which he dwelt on this point, and having begged him not to lead her to forswear herself to the saints, at last she suffered an impatient expression to escape her lips, 'The sign that you want is that God should deliver me from your hands;' but she recollected herself, and immediately after replied by an ingenious allegory.

'The sign you ask me about was most beautiful, honourable, and easy of belief; the richest that can be imagined.'

'Does this sign still exist?'

'It will endure for a thousand years, and more; it is in the treasury of the King.'

'Did it come from God?'

'It was an angel who, on the part of God, trusted it to the King; and he and those who were with him have seen the sign.'

'Was it the same angel who first appeared to you?'

'There is always one that never fails me.' She continued in the same figurative language: 'The angel brought a crown of pure gold to the King, which signified the realm of France; and it was an Archbishop who conveyed it to the head of the King.'

Whether Cauchon really understood poor Jeanne's allegory or not we cannot tell; but he appeared not to comprehend it, when he gravely asked her 'if the angel who brought the crown was of heaven or of earth.'

'It came from above, by the command of our Lord.'

Another snare was now laid for her. 'Do you think, Jeanne, that you cannot commit a mortal sin?'

'I do not know,' she replied; 'I depend on the will of God. If I preserve my purity of soul and body, I believe I shall be saved.'

'Is there any need of a confession, if one believes oneself to be saved?'

'The conscience,' answered Jeanne, 'can never be kept too clear.'

Cauchon was again disappointed; above all was he desirous to get an answer that would lead to fixing upon her some demoniacal arts, as the means by which she had achieved her great success and her victories.

The old sword from the church of Fierbois that broke in her hand, and most especially her standard, were represented as objects of suspicion. Respecting these the questions they put to her were weak and futile; whilst Jeanne's answers were sometimes touching, from their simplicity and their religious trust; and at others they evinced a proud contempt for its being supposed that a supernatural power could be annexed to things so insignificant, fanciful signs, that had 'no reference to the soul and the conscience.'

'Have you any rings?' solemnly demanded one of these wise interrogators; for be it specially noted that rings were held to be of great power in magical rites.

'I have a ring that was given me by my father and mother, and one which was given me by my brother: the Burgundians took one from me, and you have the other. Give it for me to the Church.'

'What words were on the ring that you say the Burgundians took from you?'

'Jhesus Maria.'

They could make nothing demoniacal out of the rings; so they asked her which she loved the best, her sword or her standard.

'I loved my standard forty times better than my sword,' she answered with vivacity. 'When I carried it myself, it was to avoid killing any one. I never killed any man.'

'Have you ever said to your people that they should

carry fearlessly your standard, and that it would bring them good fortune?'

'No; I said to my people, Go in boldly amongst the English; and I did so myself.'

'Which helped most? You the standard, or the standard you?'

'If the victory was of the standard, or the victory of Jeanne, either came from God,' she replied reverently.

'Did you not take the standard into the church to wave it over your King's head?'

'I do not know about its waving over the King's head;' but the standard had helped the work, and therefore it had a right to share the honours.'

With equal dignity and good sense, she replied to the questions about the respect that was paid to her by the people.

'Were not masses and orisons said in your honour?'

'If those of my party prayed for me, I cannot think there was any harm in it; if they did so believing that I was sent by God, they were not mistaken.'

'For what purpose did those of your party kiss your hands and your feet?'

She replied that she could not prevent it; the poor came to her, for she had never harmed them, but helped them as far as she was able.

These learned interrogators, who so far had failed to draw from her anything on which to build a charge either of heresy or sorcery, thought it might be effected if she

could be induced to make an avowal that she had first received her mission under the auspices of the Fairies! It was, in fact, the popular belief that she had first received it under the *Lady tree;* but no ill was thought of Jeanne on that account. She replied that her voices came to her as well under that tree as in other places. She was most seriously questioned as to whether fairies were evil spirits or not. She simply said that she knew nothing about them.

Still the interrogators stuck to the fairies, and on another occasion they gravely asked her whether she was one of those who went out with them to their nocturnal meetings to dance with them. It was well known, they asserted, that at Domremi these rites were practised, 'not as with devils and sorcerers on the nights of the *Sabbat* (Friday and Saturday), but on the nights of Wednesdays and Thursdays; the nights of *Mercury* and of *Groyon,* which at the time then present were the nights when the dwarfs of Britain danced their caricoles round the tolmens.'[1]

This display of learning in the arts of magic, and concerning the manners of fairies, puzzled poor Jeanne; she had never fancied there could be any harm about the *Beau Mai* or the *Lady tree* of Domremi. And she told these grave interrogators, with a simplicity that one would have thought must have touched the hearts even of the hardest amongst such stern bigots, how, when she was a child, she

[1] Henri Martin.

loved to play under the boughs of the *Lady tree*, to hang upon them her garlands of flowers, and to dance with other children around it; but yet not often, for she used to sing more than she danced, and liked it better. Her godmother, she admitted, had told her about the fairies being fond of the *Lady tree*, and said she had seen them there; but for herself she never had. Jeanne's answers were all so clear and open, that nothing could be made out against her concerning the fairies.

They next teazed her about St. Catherine and St. Margaret—how she knew the one from the other, and how they were dressed; and when she saw St. Michael, what were the angels like who attended him; and if he had clothes on, or if he was naked.

'Can you think,' said Jeanne indignantly, 'the Lord had not enough to find him clothes?'

Then she was asked if the saints hated the English.

'They love what God loves, and hate what He hates.'

'Do you think that God hates the English?'

'How God may esteem their souls, I know not,' she replied.

They then brought forward the circumstance of the Count Armagnac having written to ask her which of the rival Popes was the true one.

This was a dangerous question, and she saw it.

'I answered by telling the Count Armagnac, that my voices had not informed me; but for myself, I believed in the Pope of Rome.'

They continued to harass her with puerile and irritating questions, till at length 'the inspiration of the Sibyl of France' seemed to be called up, as with flashing eyes, and a vehemence such as transported her when she rushed upon the defenders of Les Tournelles, she exclaimed: 'Seven years will not pass away before the English shall lose a greater stake than that they risked at Orleans. The English shall lose all they have in France. I know it by the revelation of my voices, as well as I know that you are here in my sight. This shall be before seven years; I am sorry it will not be sooner. Before St. Martin's day in the winter you will see many things, and it is probable the English will be brought to the dust. My saints,' she continued, 'St. Catherine and St. Margaret, have promised that my King shall regain all his kingdom, and that they will take me into paradise. They gave also another promise.'

'What was it?'

'I will tell you three months hence.'

'Will you be free, then, in three months?'

'In three months,' she replied, 'it will be well if I am delivered. Those who would destroy me in this world may probably go before I do. I have often asked my voices leave to depart from my prison; but I am still in it. Sometimes I have cried to Heaven, Help Thou! Yes, God will help!'

As we read these incoherent answers made by Jeanne, it seems as if the cruelties she had undergone (chained

day and night, with men at all hours as guards in her chamber), the want of proper care, and the harassment of her examinations, had so excited her naturally ardent temperament, that she was driven to the verge of frenzy. Her assessors, on hearing her impassioned language, became furious, and terrified at her predictions. 'She had,' says the French historian, 'identified her own existence with that of her country, and entertained the conviction that she should be delivered by some great victory.'[1] Alas! her deliverance was to be that of death, and not in this world was she to receive the crown of victory!

The first part of the *procès* ended on the 3d of March, when Cauchon announced that he was about to exchange some of the assessors for a number of Doctors who were experienced in the laws, divine and human; he would no longer, therefore, fatigue so many of the clergy, but would select a certain number, with authority to examine Jeanne in her prison; that all the assessors should have copies of these private examinations, in order to think them over, and that none who had been on the trial could be permitted to leave Rouen before its close.

Cauchon's motives were quite transparent. He found, to his surprise, that some of his picked men were not so amenable to his leading against the accused as he expected; that Jeanne's strong sense, and, when roused, masculine spirit, united to the gentleness of a most womanly heart and a deep religious feeling, had acted like a spell of

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 263.

fascination upon several among them. With Jeanne *present*, he knew not how these men might at last determine in her favour; *absent*, it might be otherwise, and more especially if they were separated, so that one could not support the other in any debate that arose in her favour.

It was just at this time that a certain John Lohier, a lawyer of great celebrity, came into Rouen; and Cauchon lost not a moment in the attempt to gain him over to give assistance. For this purpose he laid before him the register of the trial, and endeavoured in every possible way to obtain from him an opinion favourable to the proceedings, and adverse to the Maid. But nothing could bias the opinion of this clear-headed, upright lawyer. He read all, listened to the secretary Thomas de Courcelles' explanations, and Cauchon's statements, and in conclusion pronounced the trial to be unfair, unauthorized by any law civil or ecclesiastic, and altogether invalid; that the whole case seemed to him to be got up only from motives of hatred and resentment, and as such he would have nothing to do with it.

This rebuff from so eminent a lawyer vexed Cauchon, but did not induce him to alter his course. He was indefatigable in the steps he took to complete measures for the destruction of Jeanne. The motives which urged him on were powerful; he was the sworn tool of Bedford, that proud, stern Regent, who knew well how much depended on the Maid's death,—her very existence, though in prison, still being a terror to the English soldiers. They thirsted

for the blood of the witch, as they called her, by whose devilish magic they had been worsted in the field and lost Orleans. The miscreant Cardinal Beaufort, who ruled England and the boy Henry, feared also that if Jeanne escaped, the French would renew their attacks with fresh vigour, till, as she predicted, the English were driven from the land. Even before the trial commenced, Beaufort had determined its issue—had reminded Cauchon that the Church, and not the English Government, must bring about Jeanne's condemnation; and that the Archbishopric of Rouen was still to be disposed of by a recommendation of England's ruler to the Pope.

CHAPTER XIV.

Jeanne questioned about the Church — desirous to appeal to the Pope — the Assessors resolve to reduce the Matter to Articles of Accusation — John of Luxembourg — Stafford and Warwick arrive at Rouen — visit Jeanne in Prison — the Interview — Stafford draws his Dagger on her — Articles in Accusation of Treason, Heresy, and Sorcery — her Spirited Replies — her Difficulty respecting the Church Militant — the Chapter treat her as a Heretic — Noble Conduct of the Bishop of Avranches — the Maid threatened with Torture — her Judges awed by her Firmness — Torture suspended — Doctors of the University condemn her — the Maid seriously ill — she must be saved to be burnt — she is condemned — preached to at St. Ouen — her Recantation procured by Artifice — sent back to her Prison — her Sufferings — Cruelty and Insult — her Female Attire taken from her — obliged to put on Male Attire — condemned for assuming it — the Last Scenes of her Sufferings — her Heroic Conduct and Death — Triumph of her Enemies.

ONE question remained, which Cauchon almost feared to put to Jeanne: for though, if she gave a denial, she was lost; yet, if she assented, it would take the case entirely out of his hands, as he proposed to conduct it. The question was this: Would she submit that the Church should decide whether her revelations were of divine authority or not? This was a terrible stumbling-block. Convinced in her

own mind that her mission was from God, Jeanne hitherto would never suffer it to be questioned. But with the same courage as she evinced when she stood before the enemy at Orleans, did she now meet the assault upon her revelations.

'For the Church,' she said, 'I love it, and with all my power I would support the Christian faith. As to the works which my *mission* enabled me to do, I refer them to the God of heaven, who sent me.' Still she was tormented about submitting the question of her mission to the Church, and asked if she thought that the Pope had a right to be satisfied concerning her faith and her conscience.

'I desire to be brought before him,' she replied, 'and I will answer to him whatever I ought to answer.'

Cauchon could make nothing of this; and so, being perplexed, on the 18th of March he read what had passed to a selected number of assessors, when it was resolved to reduce the whole matter to certain articles of accusation.

She was still subjected to the same cruel treatment. Her heart ached to be deprived of the holy rites of Easter, then at hand. She had already obtained permission to hear the Mass and receive the Communion, provided she would consent to quit her man's attire; but unfortunately she had refused, from the mistaken notion that she had adopted such attire as a part of her mission, and could not throw it off without the order of her voices.

It was about this time that John of Luxembourg, who had sold her to the English for the ten thousand livres, came into Rouen, and with the Earls of Stafford and Warwick, from motives of curiosity, went to see her in her chains.

'Jeanne,' said Stafford, 'we are come to ransom you, on condition that you never more take up arms against us.'

'In the name of God,' she replied, 'do not mock me, for you have neither the will nor the power to ransom me.'

Stafford persisted that he was in earnest.

'I know well,' she replied, 'that the English intend to put me to death, believing that after my death they will regain the kingdom of France; but were there a hundred thousand *Goddams* more than there now are in it, they will not keep what they have already won in this kingdom.'

Stafford, furious at her answer, was in the act of drawing his dagger to stab her, when the Earl of Warwick caught him by the arm and prevented his purpose.

On the 27th of March, thirty-eight assessors assisted the procurator D'Estivet in drawing up the act of accusation. The most violent proposed at once to excommunicate her, unless she would swear to answer truly all those things she had not yet answered on her trial. The majority agreed that she should be compelled to reply to the Articles. To this Cauchon assented, and artfully offered Jeanne a counsel from among his chosen set.

She thanked him, and said: 'I have no intention to separate myself from the counsel of God; and I am ready to speak the truth on every point of your proceedings.'

Two sittings were employed in the reading of the Articles. The procurator required that Jeanne should be declared to be as follows: 'A sorceress, a diviner, a false prophetess, an invocator of evil spirits, a magician, a schismatic, a sacrilegious person, an idolatress, a disturber of the peace thirsting for the spilling of human blood, quitting without shame the modesty of her sex, and scandalously putting on the dress of a man-at-arms; for these and other abominations done before God and man, as a seducer of princes and of the people, usurping the honours of divine worship, as a heretic, and vehemently suspected of heresy, she was accused in the Articles,' etc. etc. Poor Jeanne! no less than seventy articles, occupying one hundred and twenty odd pages, were spun out against her, founded on the preamble above cited. And to each of these articles she was required to reply, and did reply.

To the seventeenth, referring to her mission, she answered boldly: 'I was charged on the part of God to declare to my King that God would give him all his kingdom, and I did so.'

When it came to the question about reference to the Church militant, she said: 'I will refer me to the Church militant, provided it will not require of me an impossibility,

What to my mind would be an impossibility is this: that I should retract what I have stated concerning my visions and revelations, or what I have stated I did by their command. These are matters that I will not retract at the pleasure of any man. That which God empowered me to do, I did; and henceforth, whatever He commands me to do, I will not fail to do it.'

After this scene, the majority of the Chapter of Rouen were disposed to treat Jeanne as a heretic. One, however, the Bishop of Avranches, had been so much impressed by her answers, that he strongly argued it would be right to refer the whole matter to the Pope in Council. No attention was paid to his opinion; it was too much in Jeanne's favour to please Cauchon. But though much had been attempted, nothing was yet done altogether satisfactory. To give a favourable colour to the proceedings to the world at large, she must be made to deny her mission, or to avow that her inspirations were false—that the whole enterprise was Satanic. To obtain this result, it was now deemed necessary to have recourse to TORTURE.

On the 9th May, two of the judges, with eight of the assessors, went to the tower of the old Castle, where Jeanne was ordered to be brought into their presence. She started on entering, and well might she do so. Behind them stood two executioners, with the instruments of torture by their side. Jeanne was exhorted to

reply with truth on some points which hitherto she had evaded, or answered in an unsatisfactory manner. Her attention was then drawn to the officials, and she was told they only awaited the order to put her to the torture, all the instruments being ready and before her sight. She was likewise assured that all this was intended to draw from her a confession for the good of her soul and body, and she would expose both to great danger by obstinacy and falsehood.

'You may tear me limb from limb,' she replied, 'till you free my soul from my body; I cannot tell you other than I have already told. I have been strengthened by St. Gabriel. I have advised with my voices, should I submit to the Church? They replied: If you would that our Lord should aid you, attend to Him in all you do. Shall I be burnt? I asked. Wait for our Lord, He will aid, was the reply!'

The unshaken firmness of Jeanne's deportment, the emphatic manner in which she referred to God's assistance, and the elevated expression of her countenance, overawed her judges. They decided to suspend the torture until they had taken more advice; for seeing, they said, how hardened she had become, they feared torture would be of no avail. Jeanne had been ill, and possibly Cauchon apprehended she might die under it, and disgrace fall on himself for permitting such cruelty. There was another meeting, however, about the torture, when twelve assessors were consulted. Three were for it, nine

against it; and one of the latter remarked, 'There was enough to condemn her without it.'

On the 19th of May, the judges informed the Assembly that, wishing for the most learned and impartial opinions, they had sent three learned Doctors to the University of Paris, to give an oral account of all their proceedings at Rouen, and to receive their decision on the same. They had just received the answer, conveying the highest approval of all that had been done. They ventured also to advise Henry, King of England and France, to bring the affair to a close as fast as possible, and to make an example in the punishment of this wicked woman Jeanne la Pucelle, whose scandalous conduct had infected the sheepfold of the Christianity of the West. The Doctors of Theology had considered, and decreed Jeanne's revelations to be fictions, falsehoods, and superstitions, proceeding from Belial, Satan, and Behemoth (more learned, observes Henri Martin, than the Doctors of Rouen, they knew the names of the devils); and for the rest, that Jeanne was a blasphemer, thirsting for human blood, seditious, a promoter of usurpation, an idolatress, schismatic, and an apostate.

To these were added many other injurious and malignant expressions. They ended by recommending that Jeanne should be given up to the secular powers, in order to incur the vengeance due to her crimes. But before this last piece of advice, which exactly suited the purpose of the judges, to take the odium of her death off the

Church, and cast it on the secular authorities, poor Jeanne, harassed and worn out by all she had undergone since her imprisonment, fell grievously sick, and it seemed probable that she would escape the hands of her persecutors by a natural death. The fear of this gave rise to the following admonition to the Doctors from the Earl of Warwick, who had the charge of her safe keeping:—

'On no consideration in the world would the King have her (Jeanne) die a natural death. He bought her at so high a price, as he understood she was to be burnt. Pray, therefore, get her well as quick as possible.' Thus shamefully did the Earl of Warwick employ the name and authority of Henry, a child of nine years old, to do an act of murder.[1]

Jeanne, unfortunately for herself, lived through a severe illness to meet a more cruel fate. Cardinal Beaufort and the Regent Bedford became somewhat impatient. What need to make so much ado about sending to the stake a girl convicted by her own acts, and by the opinion of the University of Paris, of being a sorceress? This was exactly the point to which all these iniquitous proceedings tended. That Charles VII. should have been helped to his throne, and carried to be crowned at Rheims, by a sorceress, in that age of ignorance and superstition would throw such discredit upon him, that it would help the pretensions of Henry to the sovereignty of France, more than any other consideration. Burnt, therefore, Jeanne must be.

[1] Barante, vol. iii. p. 402.

She was informed of the decision of the University of Paris; and being called on for an answer, replied: 'I can only refer to that which I have said before during the trial, and I will maintain it when I am in the flames,—even to the moment of my death.' This was enough. The procurator, D'Estivet, declared the case had been heard, and sent it on the next day to be finished by the secular powers.

On the 24th of May, Jeanne was conducted to the cemetery behind the Abbey of St. Ouen, the magnificent Church of which exists to the present time. The English and the inhabitants of the city pressed forward with tumult and execration to behold the witch, but many were present who looked on in silence, not daring to speak the feelings of compassion that filled their hearts for the innocent victim of the most deadly malice. Two lofty scaffolds had been erected. The one accommodated Cardinal Beaufort, with two judges and thirty assessors; Jeanne stood on the other, surrounded by the men who had conducted her from prison. The executioner was in a cart beneath; and a learned Doctor, famed for his theological eloquence, took his place facing her. The proceedings commenced with a sermon; for all persons intended to be committed to the flames were preached to before the reading of their sentence; and in these sermons, an assurance of eternal as well as temporal fire was generally given to the prisoner.

For the first time, on the morning of that day when

Jeanne was brought from her prison, it was observed that she looked deadly pale, and her countenance was marked by an expression of restless uncertainty. She had been seriously ill, and the immense efforts she had made in the prolonged struggle with her bitter enemies had exhausted her bodily strength, and even began to tell upon her hitherto undaunted spirit. The sermon commenced, 'The branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine.' The application was plain — the Church was the vine, Jeanne the branch. The preacher, in dealing with the text, became insolently personal, and covered the helpless victim with the most heartless abuse. She bore it with meekness and resignation; but when he opened his fire of abuse against Charles, her spirit was roused to momentary exertion, and she exclaimed: 'Do not speak thus of my King; he is a good and true Christian.' To the last she would not suffer a word that was derogatory to Charles to be spoken undefended before her; so loyal, so faithful was her attachment to the ungrateful Prince, who had given her up without an effort to save her.

Again pressed on the subject of the Church, she once more expressed a wish to be referred to the Pope, but was answered 'that he was a long way off, and the Bishops represented him the same as if he were present.'

On hearing this she remained silent.

Cauchon then proceeded to read to her the sentence of condemnation. When Jeanne understood that she was to be delivered to the secular power, and that the man she

saw in the cart was to be her executioner, she nearly fainted. A cloud passed before her sight, and, according to the account of her enemies, she said in a low voice, 'that she would submit to what the judges and the Church directed.'

'Will you then no longer uphold your visions and revelations?'

'I refer to the judges, and to our mother the Church,' she replied.

'She must then sign this paper,' said Erard; and he directed the apparitor to read a declaration already prepared for the purpose. It was a shameful document, as it was nothing less than an acknowledgment of the justice of the worst charges brought against her, and more especially that of sorcery.

Exhausted as Jeanne was from weakness, bewildered by the tumult of the crowd, and the stir and agitation of those around her, all pressing upon her to sign she knew not what, she had still presence of mind enough left to ask for an explanation of what she was required to sign.

The apparitor, Massieu, told her that it was an act of abjuration. Possibly she had never heard the term before; and she answered, evidently bewildered by the expression, 'I will refer to the Church universal whether I ought to abjure or not.'

'That will never do,' said one of the assessors.

'Will the clerks of the Church, then, in whose hands I shall be placed, read the paper and advise me?'

'No, Jeanne, you must abjure now, or be burnt.'

'I would rather sign than be burnt,' said the unhappy Jeanne.

A cross was at once traced on the paper, and an English secretary of Cardinal Beaufort seized her hand (for he knew she could not write), and, placing the pen in her fingers, guided them to write her name, as it had been written by her own secretary in the time of her successful defiance of the English. Such was the scene during the only moments of weakness shown by Jeanne in the whole of her extraordinary career. 'They were nobly atoned for before her death.'

Thus fraudulently was Jeanne's abjuration brought about. She was next told that, by the mercy of the Church, she was pardoned, on condition that she never more put on man's apparel, but wore clothes befitting her sex; that she was to be consigned to a prison for the remainder of her life, where, by eating the bread and drinking the water of affliction, she must do penance for her sins. It does not seem clear whether Jeanne, in her bewilderment, quite understood this merciful disposal of her; for she said: 'Now, then, you of the Church, guide me to your prisons, that I may no longer be in the hands of the English.'

Her wish thus expressed seemed so entirely in agreement with the right of the Church to take charge of her, that the assessors at once assented. But Cauchon met it with only these words, addressed to the guard: 'Take her

back to where you brought her from.' 'They sent her,' says Henri Martin, 'back to the hell whence they had promised to deliver her.'[1]

The English were dissatisfied with having her returned to their keeping; and the soldiers, with shoutings and execrations, followed her to her dismal prison in the old tower of the Castle. The soldiers even menaced Cauchon and the clergy for not sending her at once to the stake, and said that King Henry had ill employed his money in giving it to them, who did not do his work. The Earl of Warwick upbraided Cauchon and the King's Doctors for having managed so ill as to let Jeanne thus escape their hands.

'My Lord,' replied one of these, 'do not trouble yourself; we shall have her soon again.'

Whoever was the man that said this, he was probably in the secret of Cauchon's plan for her destruction. The rest is too painful to dwell upon in detail; for such a tissue of the basest treachery, and the most trivial yet cruel artifice for bringing to the stake an unfortunate and helpless woman, surely never was weaved even in the darkest pages of mediæval history.

That same afternoon, the Vicar of the Inquisitor-General and certain Doctors were taken to Jeanne in her prison, to admonish her that she must henceforth wear female attire, according to the conditions of her pardon: that she must be careful what she did; for if she fell again into

[1] Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 288.

any of her old errors, the Church must abandon her. To complete their delicate mission, these learned men required her to remove her man's apparel, and in their presence put on her woman's attire. Jeanne's feelings of modesty were shocked; but she had no choice, and so complied. She also had her hair trimmed, that she might wear it as women did in her time. She was then committed to the guard of five men-at-arms. Three were to remain in her chamber at night; two were stationed outside the door. At night she was again chained, one chain on each leg, and these were secured to a block of wood fastened by a key to the end of the bed. She could not rise till the chains were loosened.

On the second or third day, the judges received information that Jeanne had resumed male attire. Cauchon affected great anxiety, and sent a couple of doctors to see if this report were true. These doctors were driven away by the guard (who had beforehand received their instructions), and were not allowed to approach the prisoner's chamber. The news of Jeanne's relapse was eagerly spread far and wide; and then an order was given by the Cardinal, that as many of the assessors as could be collected for the purpose, should go and see with their own eyes whether Jeanne was once more in male attire. They went, and found her, true enough, in the prohibited dress; her face bruised, and her eyes streaming with tears, her bosom rent with sobs, and altogether wretched. Whatever explanation she might have given

for her change of attire, or the cause of her distress, Cauchon would not suffer it to be registered.

Not till more than twenty years after, when, by order of Charles VII., then established in his kingdom, a revision of Jeanne's cruel sentence was instituted, did the frightful secrets of her prison-house become known. It seems that whilst sleeping, chained in her bed, her female attire had been removed, and her man's dress left in its place, for her to choose between that or none. Henri Martin adds to this another circumstance even more shocking, to show how infamously she was treated. An English writer (Lord Mahon), in the *Quarterly Review*, also relates it:—'A priest named Martin L'Advenu, who was allowed to receive her confession at this period (that was before her burning), and to shrive her in her dying moments, was afterwards examined at the trial of Revision, and declared that an English lord had entered her prison and attempted violence, that after his departure she was found with her face disfigured and in tears, and that she had assumed man's apparel as a more effectual safeguard to her honour.'

Her death was now resolved upon as a relapsed heretic; for it seems that she could not be burnt on a charge of heresy till a case of relapse could be made clear against her, and by the machinations of Cauchon that was now effected. That demon in a human form had the cruelty to ask her with cold irony if she had heard her voices since her abjuration. She replied firmly that she

had. On his inquiring what they had said to her, she answered that God had spoken to her by St. Catherine and St. Margaret, and told her that she had done wrong in denying her mission for fear of fire.

At this interview Jeanne was again herself, and with a calm and courageous spirit maintained the truth of her mission and her voices. Such undaunted courage rendered Cauchon uneasy, more especially as Jeanne refused a second abjuration. It was desirable, in order to remove the odium as much as possible from her persecutors, that she should be held guilty by her own confession, that it might appear to the world she was an acknowledged sorceress. There was yet a roundabout way to do this—to make her appear as a penitent for her crimes. The understood sign of penitence with the public was, that the condemned should be admitted to the Communion before suffering. Cauchon therefore directed that she should receive it.

The 30th May 1431 must ever be memorable in the annals of France for the fearful tragedy on that day enacted at Rouen, when a most heroic victim was sacrificed to the vilest passions of mankind. It was yet early morning when Jeanne was surprised by a visit from the apparitor, who came to summon her to appear before her judges in the old market-place of Rouen. His visit was followed by the appearance of the Dominican monk L'Advenu. He announced his coming to be by the order of Cauchon, to inform her that the sentence of the

judges had declared her 'relapsed, excommunicated, and a heretic;' that he was appointed to a most painful office, to let her know she was on that morning to suffer, and to prepare her for death.

Jeanne had hitherto believed that her saints would in some way vouchsafe her deliverance; and now, when she found she was to die, and by the dreadful means of fire, the natural fear of death was stronger than her resolution to suffer with courage. Notwithstanding all she had endured, life still beat strong in her veins, and the faculties of her energetic mind were undimmed by despondency or age. Death seldom comes before the young as a reality, as a near thing, and Jeanne was not twenty years old. At first she seemed stunned as by an unexpected blow; but on being made to understand there was no hope to escape the doom that awaited her, she tore her hair, and filled the vault of her cell with her cries.

'Is it thus!' she exclaimed; 'and do they thus horribly and cruelly treat me! Must my body, which is pure and undefiled, this day be reduced to ashes! I would be beheaded seven times rather than be burnt! I appeal to the Judge of all, as witness to the great wrong they have done me.'

Cauchon, with some of the assessors, at that moment entered the cell. Jeanne fixed upon him a withering look of indignation, as she exclaimed, 'Bishop, I die by your means!'

The wretch was confounded, and made a feeble effort to throw the responsibility of her death from himself on his victim. 'Ah, Jeanne,' he said, 'bear all patiently; you die because you have not kept the promise that you gave to us.'

'Alas!' she replied, with less vehemence, 'if you had kept your promise with me, and had put me into the prisons of the Church, and placed me in the hands of women and the clergy, and not in those of my enemies, it would never have come to this. For this I summon you before God.'

Cauchon trembled at her solemn appeal.

That which followed between Jeanne and himself and his assessors has not come down to us in a credible form. Some days after Jeanne's death, Cauchon caused it to be written from his own dictation, having previously consulted with several of those ecclesiastics who had supported him in the prosecution. There may be some foundation of truth in the details, yet, so recorded, they can hardly be relied upon.

Jeanne had believed—and her enemies knew it—almost to the last, that she should be delivered by some great victory. At length, instead of 'France coming armed as her liberator, she saw England preparing for her the funeral pile by the hands of Frenchmen.' Cauchon reported that the assessors said to her, one after the other, 'You see, Jeanne, well, that your voices have deceived you.'

'My voices deceived me!' she exclaimed. 'Since they

have deceived me, and since men of the Church will have it that they are the voices of evil spirits, I will defer to them—I will believe the voices no more.'

That Jeanne ever spoke these words is most doubtful; but if she did, she might have spoken them ironically: for, when roused by her impassioned feelings, she was very free and fearless in her speech, as we have seen in her interview with Warwick in prison.

But God did not suffer Cauchon's misrepresentations to stand to the injury of Jeanne's memory. A young Dominican named De Toutmoille, who was with L'Advenu when he came to announce to Jeanne the decree of death, on the revision of her sentence twenty years after that event, deposed on oath, as well as L'Advenu himself, to the account they gave of the interview, and exposed the falsehood of Cauchon in the relation he had given of her denial of the faith she placed in her voices.

We have already stated for what purpose that wily man proposed to allow Jeanne to receive the Communion as a penitent. She did so with deep devotion and abundance of tears. Between the hours of eight and nine, those who were to take a part in the ceremony, and those who were to conduct the victim to the sacrifice, assembled in the court of the old Castle.

Jeanne was brought out. She had somewhat recovered her firmness, and walked steadily, though her face was still streaming with tears. She was silent. Her heart had been moved to tenderness, and her spirit subdued

to perfect resignation, by the consolation of the holy Communion, which had been given to her with much kindly feeling by L'Advenu. There was a pause in the court-yard whilst the long gown was thrown over her—the shroud of death ordained for those about to suffer by fire. To complete the cruel mockery, a high cap was placed on her young and still beautiful head, decorated and inscribed as appointed by the Inquisition for the cap of its victims, 'Heretic, Relapsed, Apostate, Idolatress,' and bordered with pictured devils in the flames.

Jeanne's dress being completed, she was placed in an open car drawn by four horses. The apparitor Massieu, L'Advenu, and another priest, Isambard de la Pierre, came into it, and took their seats by her side. They never quitted her till all was over. The melancholy *cortége* set forward, and no sooner was it without the gates of the Castle than a tumult arose of a most singular description. A priest, by his looks and gestures seemingly distracted, rushed through all opposition, mounted the car, threw himself on his knees before Jeanne, and with broken accents and tears of bitterness implored her forgiveness. It was L'Oiseleur, that wretched agent of Cauchon, who, under the disguise of a friend to the French party, and as a fellow-prisoner, had counselled her and drawn from her statements injurious to herself on her trial, whilst persons concealed in the next chamber, who could hear every word spoken, took the whole down in writing. On seeing him with clasped hands at the feet of Jeanne imploring her

pardon, which she freely bestowed, the English soldiers were so enraged that, but for the interference of the Earl of Warwick, they would have torn him to pieces.

Eight hundred English men-at-arms conducted the car to the old market-place. The crowd was so dense,—for thousands had assembled from the towns, villages, and country,—that but for the soldiers, who drove the people before them, the car could not have passed forward. It was no day of triumph for the enemies of Jeanne. Grief was depicted in almost every face; men as well as women wept and sobbed, while cries and groans of sympathy filled the air. If there had only been among the populace one truly chivalrous spirit,—Alençon, Dunois, La Hire, —to have led a body of Charles' troops, caused some diversion without the walls, and menaced the dastardly rulers within them, the people of Rouen would have risen to a man, and have delivered Jeanne from her murderers. But where was Charles? where those men of renown who had fought by her side as she led them on to victory? where were their swords now? Sheathed by selfishness, jealousy, or fear.

Three scaffolds, besides the lofty one for the burning, had been prepared. One was for Cardinal Beaufort, ruler of England during the minority of Henry, and his attendant bishops and grandees; another for the judges and ecclesiastics; and the third for Jeanne, with the theologian who was to preach the sermon, her confessor, and two other monks of his order. The funeral pile was raised to a vast

height, that every one might behold the spectacle of the condemned enduring her torments in the midst of the flames.

As Jeanne looked upon it, she gave a fearful shriek, the next moment clasped her hands, and exclaimed, 'O Rouen, Rouen! am I to die here? O Rouen! I fear thou wilt be made to suffer for my death!'

She then became calm, and listened with quiet resignation to the sermon of Nicholas Midi, who was selected on account of his eloquence to preach to her. He concluded with the conventional form on such occasions: 'Jeanne, go in peace; the Church can no longer protect you.'

Jeanne made no reply, but with a composed and solemn deportment, that struck even her enemies with a sense of reverence, rose up, threw herself on her knees, and with a voice firm and clear, her soul raised by her deep religious feelings as earth and all things earthly seemed to pass away, looked up to heaven and prayed long and earnestly. The fervour of her devotion touched every heart; there was no resisting the sympathy she called forth. All wept; and those among the clergy who were made of stuff less stern than some of their order, absolutely beat their breasts for sorrow.

She looked calmly round, and begged the prayers of every one present. Then, fixing her eyes on those who had more especially persevered for her destruction, with much solemnity she declared that she forgave every one who had injured her. She next prayed for her friends and her country; and in praying for her enemies, 'she

'prayed for two kings and two realms.' Again she raised her eyes to heaven, and with a look so touching, so sublime, that for the moment she bore away with her the bitterest of her enemies.[1] The eyes even of Cauchon and Cardinal Beaufort glistened with tears. But all things must have an end: the Cardinal's tears were not suffered to flow long enough to soften the hardness of his heart. The day's work must be finished; he therefore gave the signal. Cauchon understood it, and read aloud the condemnatory sentence, which, after calling Jeanne by all the vile epithets before recited, gave her over to the secular power, and ended (according to the formula) by begging that power to mitigate their judgment, and spare her in life and limb. Then the judges descended and declared Jeanne handed over to the secular authority; all knew what that was—death.

The unhappy Maid called on Christ with much agitation, and asked for a cross. An Englishman who stood by broke his staff and made a small cross for her. She kissed and meekly placed it in her bosom. Immediately after, probably wishing for the holy emblem that had been in a sacred place, she requested the apparitor and the monk Isambard to get for her a crucifix high enough to be held up before her sight, that as long as sight remained she might look upon it till she expired. They procured one from a church that was near, and brought it to her. Long and ardently did she embrace it.

[1] Henri Martin.

There were thousands of weeping eyes and aching hearts around her, but not one dared make an effort to step forward and tear her from the grasp of the ferocious men-at-arms, who became impatient to see her burnt, and have it over. It was the duty of the magistrate who represented the secular power to give the order for the execution. He lingered, as if he could not find courage to do it, when two subordinate captains, with some of their detestable followers, seized Jeanne, and brought her down from the scaffold where she had listened to the sermon and the sentence.

The magistrate found he could do nothing; the rude soldiery would not suffer him to read the form he had prepared for the announcement of the sentence, so loud were the cries of their impatience to 'burn the witch,' 'burn the witch.' All that he could do was to wave his hand, and say, 'Take her, take her!' A long and deep groan was heard from the crowd; and such was the impatience and clamour of the archers, that they reproached the priests, who continued praying with Jeanne to the last moment, and brutally asked the true servants of God in this charitable act, 'if they intended to keep the men-at-arms on that spot to have their dinner.'[1]

So horror-struck were several of the assessors who had given their verdict against her, and many of the clergy who had not been on the trial, that they could not remain to see the end of the victim, and fled in haste from the scene.

[1] Barante, vol. iii.

From some motive of diabolical malice, the pile had been constructed to lengthen the period of suffering, and from its vast height the executioner would be unable, as was usual in some way known to his craft, to shorten the agony with the life of the victim. The Maid was at length placed on the funeral pile, supported between L'Advenu and Isambard. They resumed their prayers for her with much ardour, as she kept her eyes fixed on Heaven, her only refuge from the cruelty of men, as if glad to avoid looking on the shocking realities of earth that environed her; her fervent prayers and her tears were unceasing.

Strange does it seem, that when the executioner came to bind her to the stake, she was heard repeatedly to call aloud on St. Michael, as if his form, now in the last moments of her life, was before her as it had been at the commencement of her career, when she declared that it was St. Michael who appeared to convey to her the commands of God. She was bound without the slightest resistance. The executioner approached, the fatal torch in his hand. She screamed, and then spoke in hurried accents to her confessor. A great shout of exultation arose from the soldiery. In the midst of the tumult she was heard calling upon God, 'Jesus, Maria! my voices, my voices!' Could there be a doubt, in the moments of expiring life, in the midst of the tortures of her cruel agony, whether she believed in the reality of her mission? 'Yes,' she repeated, whilst the flames were ascending around her, 'my voices were of God! All that I have done was by

the command of God. No, my voices did not deceive me: my revelations were of God!'

The flames increased, and ascended still higher. The monks at her side did not heed them—they thought only of Jeanne; she saw their danger, and bade them descend. They obeyed, but remained at the base of the pile holding up the crucifix, the emblem of her Lord's sufferings, that it might, if possible, be the last thing that met her eyes before her spirit was admitted to the light of the martyr's glory. Nothing more was heard from her but invocations to God, interrupted by the cries of her long-drawn agony. So dense were the clouds of smoke, that at one time she could not be seen. A sudden gust of wind turned the current of the flaming whirlwind, and Jeanne was seen for a few moments. She gave one terrific cry, pronounced the name of Jesus, bowed her head, and the spirit returned to God who gave it. Thus perished Jeanne, the Maid of Orleans.

All did not end here. The tumult increased rather than subsided. An English archer, whose hatred to Jeanne had been so extreme, that he had made a vow, with his own hand to cast a faggot on the pile whenever she was burnt, kept his vow; but at the moment he did so, Jeanne uttered the last cry of suffering humanity, and the archer fell fainting on the spot. When restored to his senses, he declared that, at the moment Jeanne gave up the ghost, he saw a white dove fly towards heaven—the dove of the Holy Spirit. One cry became universal: 'This has been a martyrdom!'

The Cardinal and Cauchon exerted themselves to the utmost to derive all the benefit they could from the crime they had brought to so successful an issue. That the men-at-arms might have no fears about Jeanne in time to come, they caused the fire to be extinguished, and the half-burnt, still smouldering remains to be open to the view of the people. The most brutal and shocking curiosity was thus gratified. The Cardinal then ordered the fire to be relumed, and the remains to be burned to ashes, so that they might be cast into the Seine, to render it impossible that any morsel of the dust of that day's sacrifice could be preserved for a relic. The execrable Cardinal was obeyed to the letter.

Loud cries of shame were even on that day heard among the populace, who proclaimed that the so-called witch was a martyr. Some said that, at the moment she died, they saw the word Jesus distinctly formed in the flames. 'We saw it; we are lost; we have burnt a saint!' 'It is a fearful murder,' publicly said the secretary of the English boy King. Before the day was closed, the executioner, with the wildness of despair, rushed to the feet of Isambard, declaring that he should never be pardoned by God for what he had done to that sainted woman. He was terrified, as he declared, beyond expression; for he could not get the heart of Jeanne to burn—it would not burn—God would not let it. Nor did this revulsion of public feeling speedily subside. The judges, the assessors, and many of the clergy who had been engaged

on the trial, could not pass along the streets without being cursed to their faces; they were pointed at with the finger of scorn, and openly branded with the name of murderers. So great were the numbers who thus dared speak the public feeling, that policy forbade any attempt at the punishment of individuals.

The English Government trembled for the consequences of what had been done; but the French bishops, who had helped to slay their heroic countrywoman, particularly Cauchon, put forward, in the most shameless manner, a false statement, in the hope to blacken the memory of Jeanne. They averred that, before her death, she recanted her connection with evil spirits, and asked pardon for having ever given herself up to them. To complete this tissue of infamous calumny, the bishops were desired 'to notify these things in their sermons, in all the churches and cathedrals throughout their dioceses, for the better information of the people!' There is no point, perhaps, in the whole range of modern history, upon which it is more difficult to form a satisfactory opinion than that of Jeanne's pretensions to supernatural intelligence. That she was of an enthusiastic temperament, gifted with natural genius of a high order, capable of great efforts, both mental and physical, is evinced by all she said, and all she did, that has come down to us. That her religion was deep-felt, sincere, and entered into her daily life, no doubt can be entertained. But the question of inspiration of her mission forms the difficulty. That she be-

lieved in it herself, seems certain. But what of her visions and her voices? We find it as difficult to believe in their reality, as we do to question her veracity. It is possible she might have been under the influence of that kind of hallucination which, since her day, has been so common in the Cevennes; but even if we allow this, it will not account for what she accomplished.

That a poor girl, born in an obscure village, and used to watch sheep, who could not read, nor had any opportunities of instruction, should at eighteen years old have formed the design to deliver a famishing beleaguered city, surrounded by thousands of foes, and to restore her sovereign, then in the extremity of distress, to the rightful possession of his throne, and to free the land from a foreign yoke, seems more like a fantastic dream than a reality. That such a design should actually have been put into practice, and its unparalleled difficulties surmounted, is indeed marvellous. That she should have found any one to listen to her purpose, to bear her company through all the dangers of a journey of 300 miles, beset with enemies; should have overcome all the obstacles which encompassed her before she could gain access to Charles, and have made such an impression upon him, ostensibly by revealing to him the secret known but to himself,—are all marvels. Her examinations before the Parliament and Doctors at Poitiers, followed by her doing all which she declared to that august body she was commanded to do by Almighty God; the deliverance of

Orleans; her escort of Charles through a hostile country, to be crowned at Rheims, and the cessation of her own power to serve him after the year to which, she said, it was limited, — are all facts incontestably established, even in the face of those who destroyed her. It cannot, we think, be doubted that they were accomplished by the will of Almighty God. And if in some mysterious manner, beyond the power of reason, yet not contrary to it, God was pleased to make known His purpose to the simple and humble creature He chose to bring it to pass, who shall gainsay it?

The circumstances of her death were most lamentable. No reprobation can be too severe of those who put her to death, and those who made no effort to prevent it. That the Regent Bedford, Cardinal Beaufort, Warwick, and Suffolk, in mere revenge for the victories she had achieved, and to satisfy a superstitious soldiery, should suffer Jeanne, a prisoner taken in battle, contrary to all the usages of war, to be burnt alive for sorcery, was monstrous; but that Charles, who owed to her the preservation of his noblest city in the south, owed to her the very crown he wore,—that he should have offered no ransom, made no effort, but sate still, and suffered the noblest subject of his realm to be burnt alive, is a fact so abhorrent in itself, that no terms of reprobation can be more severe than it deserves.

After her death, we hear of no regrets expressed by Charles for her loss; and he gave no help to her family.

Her father died of a broken heart on learning her cruel fate. Her mother, for twenty years, was supported by an alms from the citizens of Orleans—'three francs a month' (so states the official document in the archives of the city), 'to help her to live.' Of her brothers, John and Peter, we know little. One petitioned the Duke of Orleans (when he was restored from his thraldom in England) for assistance, pleading that he had been with his sister from an early part of her military career, and that it was in consequence of her victory the Duke had preserved his estates in Orleans. The Duke, in acknowledgment, made him a grant of land. Both John and Peter had taken the name of *Du Lis* from the lily given them for their armorial bearings when Charles ennobled the whole family, during his short fit of gratitude, after Jeanne had conducted him to receive his crown at Rheims. Of these brothers, and of her aged mother, we shall hear more in due place, especially when we come to speak of that great event, twenty-five years after Jeanne's death, when her cruel trial was examined into, and pronounced to be 'perfidious and unjust,' and the innocence of the glorious Maid established throughout the world.[1]

[1] Monstrelet; Hollingshed; *Histoire de France;* Henri Martin; Barante; *History of France; Universal History; Précis Histoire de France; Dictionnaire de France;* Moreri.

CHAPTER XV.

The Martyrdom of the Maid of no Advantage to the English—Bedford brings the Boy Henry to be crowned in Paris—returns to Rouen—Suffering State of Paris—Bedford loses his Duchess—his Second Marriage—Conspiracy against Trémoille—Richmond true to Charles—Duke of Orleans ransomed—returns to France—a New Government arranged—Marie of Anjou Wife of Charles—Yolande and Agnes Sorel—Influence of Agnes over Charles—Jacques Cœur the great Merchant—his extraordinary Career—the Conference at Arras—Nothing settled—Deaths of Bedford and Isabella of Bavaria—Paris taken by Richmond's Plan—surrenders to Charles.

IT does not seem that the martyrdom of the Maid proved of much advantage to the English. Their troops, though no longer disheartened by superstitious fear, were by no means eager to be led on to fresh contests of aggression. They always hated, more especially the archers (who were principally drawn from the rural population), to cross the seas for continental warfare.[1] Charles, on his part, soon found that it would have been well for his cause had he attempted to save Jeanne; for though the spirit which her heroism had called forth continued to burn throughout France, several among his captains and

[1] Hollingshed.

friends looked on her loss as ominous of evil, and many a severe reverse had he still to sustain whilst the strife of arms was going on.

We are not about to inflict on the reader the detail of sieges, battles, conferences, truces, and negotiations which took place till the English were finally driven from the land. From this multitude of events we propose merely to select the most striking; knowing that, after the death of Jeanne, little interest can be felt for the sovereign who requited her services with such signal ingratitude.

At this time the Duke of Burgundy had many political difficulties. He had long entertained a growing dissatisfaction with his allies, and had no affection for the Regent to render him desirous to support the claims of the child Henry. His own subjects, who had lost men, towns, and money by the war, were heartily tired of it, and as with one voice demanded peace—peace with France. Bedford soon observed the shadow of the cloud which, in the withdrawal of Burgundy's friendship, was pending over him. He feared, likewise, that the gathering storm was extending to Paris; for, when last there, he had observed the sure symptoms of a change in the public mind towards himself.

Bedford was a deep-thinking man, and knew the character of the Parisians—gay even in misery, excitable, fond of the splendid and the sensational. He determined, therefore, in the hope to regain their favour, to give them the spectacle of a grand coronation at Notre Dame; and

for this purpose he would bring the little Henry to the capital. He did so in the December of 1431, and the boy was crowned with all the magnificence of the period —with feasting, pageantry, and revelry.

But no one seemed much moved by the event except Queen Isabella, the mother of Charles VII. She was at the Hôtel St. Pol, attended by her ladies, to see the procession in honour of her grandson, the little King. As it passed, she approached a window; he looked up, took off his cap, and saluted her. She bent her head, then turned aside, and wept bitterly. Did she weep for the sorrow of her wicked deeds? for having, from a feeling of resentment, conspired with his enemies to procure the disinheritance of her own son in favour of her son-in-law, the father of the child who doffed his cap to her, to secure whose succession the best blood both of England and France had been spilt? Or did Isabella weep for the loss of that power she had abused? for that splendour which had passed away, and left her unregarded to a solitude rendered doubly bitter by the neglect of those she had sinned to serve? 'Those English,' says the Parisian chronicler, 'to whom she had given a kingdom, now hardly allowed her daily bread.'[1]

Soon after, the newly made King of France and his Regent returned to Rouen, leaving much dissatisfaction, and as much poverty and misery behind them as existed in Paris before their arrival. The attempt to dazzle and

[1] *Journal du Bourgeois du Paris;* Monstrelet.

win back the favour of the people had utterly failed; and Bedford had a new source of trouble in the death of his estimable wife, Anne of Burgundy. He did not long sorrow for her: for in a short time after her decease he married a near relative and vassal of her brother Philip of Burgundy, without asking his consent; and the proud Duke never forgave him.

In 1432, an event occurred which entirely changed the aspect of Charles' affairs. A conspiracy was formed to rid him of his worthless minister and favourite, La Trémoille. The head of it was Charles d'Anjou, Count de Maine, brother of Marie, wife of the King. He was encouraged to take a part in it by his mother, the Duchess Yolande. We know how highly she estimated the Constable Richmond, who, though exiled from Court by Charles himself, had refused the most splendid offers of wealth and command if he would join the English cause, and remained faithful to his country and his sovereign. Yolande recommended the conspirators to gain over Richmond to head their plot, and conduct the execution of it. There was certainly much to admire in his character of undaunted courage and loyalty. But Richmond was a feudal lord of the severest type; vindictive, violent, even cruel; of a fierce superstition, ever seeking out and burning witches and sorcerers without pity or remorse.[1] He was nothing loth to join the conspiracy.

One dreary winter's night of 1432, there arrived at the

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont*, p. 414.

gates of Chinon some few men of that short, strong build, hard and ferocious countenance, that showed them to be Bretons from the wildest districts of Brittany. They were such as stopped at nothing in obeying the orders of Richmond. Among the conspirators was the Lord de Beuil, nephew of La Trémoille, and Gaucourt, Governor of Chinon. By order of the latter, a postern gate of the Castle was opened at midnight to admit these Bretons.

With stealthy steps they were marshalled on their way, and surprised the favourite in his bed. Their leader, Rosniven, instantly saluted him with a blow of his sword in the bowels, and raised the weapon to repeat it, when, from a feeling of sudden remorse, his arm was arrested by De Beuil, who thus saved his uncle's life. The other conspirators now rushed upon the wounded man, not, however, to kill him, but to compel him to take a solemn oath never more to approach the person of the King. De Beuil undertook to be his uncle's guard, and, without waiting for the dressing of his wound, carried him as a prisoner to the Castle of Montresor. There he remained in close durance, till those who had seized him felt assured there was nothing to fear from giving him liberty. His nephew, however, determined to make some profit by it, and refused to let him out of his cage till he paid him a good ransom from his ill-gotten stores.[1]

We must not omit stating how the King fared during this night of enterprise and confusion. He was roused

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont.*

from his slumbers by the noise it occasioned, and started from his bed greatly alarmed. In a short time he heard steps ascending to his chamber. De Beuil and the chief conspirators entered, and 'with all humility' assured him, after repeating a few of the circumstances of La Trémoille's capture, that what they had been doing was for the good of his kingdom. The only answer that Charles gave to this strange announcement, was to ask if the Constable was with them. They said he was not; and this seemed to reassure him, as he entertained a mortal fear of Richmond. The gentle Queen exerted herself to calm his agitation; and when the whole affair was related to him, the old chronicler says that he expressed himself '*tres content.*'[1]

Another event which was first set on foot about this period, is of too much interest to be passed unnoticed. We have already mentioned Burgundy's displeasure against Bedford for marrying his young kinswoman without his consent. It was soon after, that, the Duke of Orleans having failed in all his attempts to ransom himself from his thraldom, the Duke of Burgundy commenced negotiations with the English on his account, to the extreme mortification of Bedford. It was long before the parties could agree upon terms. They did so, however, at last; and though we are anticipating in point of time, it is gratifying to add that the accom-

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont*, p. 290; Monstrelet, vol. vii. p. 137; Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 320.

plished and heroic Duke of Orleans, after so many years of captivity in England, was freed by the Duke of Burgundy paying for him the enormous ransom of two hundred thousand crowns in gold. The event gave the utmost joy to the French, who, wherever he appeared, received him with a welcome that was enthusiastic. Orleans, ever loyal, was desirous to pay his duty to his sovereign; but Charles, narrow-minded and cold, was so jealous of the honours paid to his kinsman on his return, that he most ungraciously informed him, that when he came to Court he must bring with him but a small attendance. The Duke, justly offended at this rebuff, came not at all, but retired to his own estates. Some time after, he married a relative of the Duke of Burgundy, who gave him the Order of the Golden Fleece.

To return to Charles. No sooner was La Trémoille removed, than it was proposed by the conspirators and principal nobles around the King, to give him a new set of ministers. It was from this epoch that the great French historian dates the organization of a government advantageous to France. He says: 'From that time men of ability seemed to spring up from the bosom of the earth, to form the council and direct the King.' One considerable improvement arose from the admission of several men of the *bourgeois* class to fill various offices in the State. One of these was the famous Jacques Cœur, the richest and most patriotic merchant of his age, who had lately been appointed *argentier* to the King.

This man, by his remarkable abilities and indomitable perseverance, had raised himself from a humble station. He was born at Bourges, in Berri, and from a child was remarkable for industry and determination. Seeing that France was without a commerce worthy the name, he resolved to create one for her. For this purpose, by laborious travel, he made himself acquainted with the riches and resources of other countries, visiting Italy, Spain, Greece, Syria, and Egypt. Struck with the opulence of the Italian Republics, he found it had its sources in the East. He determined on his course, and instead of any intermediate dealings, resolved to open a traffic direct with the Levant, and to conquer for France the commercial empire of the Mediterranean, the centre of the world. Aware of the importance of good shipping to the wealth of a nation, by his unwearied exertions he gradually so improved the mercantile marine, that it surpassed even that of the Netherlands. He was prudent as well as energetic; and knowing the danger that there was of his enemies denouncing him to the Inquisition for inclining to infidels, he managed to protect himself by obtaining a licence from the Pope for his Eastern traffic with Mohammedans. In acknowledgment of this indulgence, he built a beautiful chapel at Marseilles, a city which he soon rendered the great market of France.

Three hundred factors worked under Jacques Cœur, and carried on his immense operations. His country

houses, as in modern parlance we should call them, were found everywhere on the coasts of the Mediterranean. 'There was not on the Eastern seas,' said a contemporary, 'a mast, but it was decorated with the *fleur de lis*.'[1] By his strict probity, his gracious manners, and a spirit of tolerance in matters of religion in advance of his age, Jacques Cœur gained an influence with Mussulman rulers more than had ever been gained by any Christian sovereign.

This merchant prince dearly loved his native town, and made some additions to its fine old cathedral, and built for himself one of the most splendid houses of his age. In order to decorate it with sculpture and painting, he brought many of the most eminent artists from Italy, and spared no cost; and such was his wealth, that the vulgar affirmed that his horses were shod with silver. Of such men was the Council of Charles now composed.

Another circumstance at this period also greatly benefited the nation; though it is impossible to state exactly how or when it commenced, a marvellous change took place in the character of Charles. He not only shook off his habitual indolence, but determined he would become a leader of his own troops into action. His spirit rose with his fortunes, and Richmond, Alençon, and Dunois eagerly seconded his resolution never to sheath the sword or hang up the shield till such time as the last Englishman should be driven from the land.

[1] Du Chastallau.

This change in the indolent, heartless, pleasure-loving sovereign, is by many contemporary and other writers attributed to no very creditable source—the influence of his spirited mistress, Agnes Sorel.

In the middle ages, we often find a singular zeal for religion combined with a want of purity in morals; and even ladies who were correct themselves, frequently winked at immorality in others. This was said to be the case with the Dowager Yolande. Her daughter, Marie D'Anjou, was the wife of Charles; but Marie was too serious and gentle to have any influence over her luxurious and supine husband. She was one of those characters, most amiable in private life, who affectionately glide down the stream of domestic duty, are led and never oppose, but who are wanting in energy to encounter difficulties, and have not courage enough to hold forth the hand in a time of trial to avert a threatened danger.

Yolande saw how it was with Charles. Her daughter had no influence over him; he must have a mistress, and she resolved to give him one who should be serviceable in his affairs, and thus, by an intermediate mode of action, she would rule the King by ruling the lady. For this purpose she chose for him the lovely, animated, and highly endowed Agnes Sorel.

'Agnes,' said a contemporary writer,[1] 'was of a benevolent disposition. She was good to the poor, delighted in men of merit, and brought to the notice of the King

[1] Olivier de la Marche.

many young nobles who served him well. Seeing how much Charles gave himself up to idleness and luxury, she threatened him with going over to Henry; for she said an astrologer had predicted that she was to be loved by the most valiant king in Christendom, and she saw plainly that this courageous prince was not Charles, but in due time would be the King of England.'[1]

French writers agree respecting the tradition that ascribes to Agnes the saving of France, when there was no heroic Jeanne left to serve him, by rousing the King to action. They all repeat the lines which Francis I. wrote under her portrait:

> 'Gentille Agnes, plus d'honneur tu mérite,
> La cause étant de France recouvrer,
> Que tout ce qu' en cloître peut ouvrer,
> Close nonain ni en désert ermite.'[2]

The *bourgeois* citizen, who left to posterity his curious *Journal de Paris*, notices Agnes in no very gracious manner, and says: 'This *demoiselle* kept high state like a duchess, and came and went with the Queen, without showing any shame for her conduct. The poor wife felt much grief, but bore it patiently; and that the King might make manifest his great sin, he gave the lady the *Chastel de Beauté*,' whence she was called the Lady of Beauty.

Richmond, to whom Charles had become reconciled very soon after the removal of La Trémoille, soon found

[1] Brantôme. [2] *Mémoires de Pierre de Jenin*, p. 326.

how much these ladies assisted by their influence the great purposes he had in view, and of which we shall shortly have to speak more at large.

There was now a reviving hope that Paris might be gained, as the citizens showed much dissatisfaction with their English rulers. Two plots were formed to shake off the yoke, but unfortunately discovered, and punished with cruel slaughter. But this affair helped to show Bedford that power was daily slipping from his hands. With a view, if possible, to overawe the people, he determined on a solemn entry, and in order to give it a religious character, caused a procession of mendicant friars to come forth and conduct him within the city walls,—'as if,' says the *bourgeois* chronicler, 'he had been a god.' This shocked the more serious portion of the inhabitants; and Bedford's welcome was of so very cold and doubtful a nature, that he left the place early in the spring, and never more passed within its gates.

All this was not unobserved by Richmond, who possessed considerable ability, not only as a general, but as a member of the Government, and his patriotic spirit was admitted by all parties. He listened, therefore, with attention to the desire now expressed by the Burgundians for a general peace; but with the reservation that it should not be made to the injury of France, and frankly told as much to the Duke, who by no means opposing, he promised to communicate with Charles on the subject.[1]

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont.*

After many debates, it was agreed that a conference should be opened at Arras, in the approaching summer, to treat for a general peace with the English, and that Charles should then make some suitable offers to Henry. But should such offers be declined, the Duke would do all he could, his honour saved, to give peace to France, and Charles should surrender to him various cities on the Lower Somme.

In order to forward these proceedings, the Duke of Burgundy, by far the most ostentatious prince of his time, set off for Arras with a noble company. He first visited Paris, and entered with great pomp, accompanied by his Duchess, his young heir the Count de Charolais, and three beautiful children picked out of his bastard family of fifteen left behind him. These *beaux jouveneaux* rode admirably well on little horses by their father's side, though the eldest was not ten years old. The Duke kept his Easter festival in Paris, and his Duchess held a Court open to all comers. He then proceeded to the conference at Arras. It was attended by all the chief princes of England, France, and various countries in Europe, and ended, as many other conferences had done before, in nothing but talk; for as the principal potentates would not listen to any measures, but for their own interest, nothing could be done for a general settlement. Charles, however, made peace with, and large concessions to the Duke of Burgundy.

In the midst of these discussions came the news that

the Regent Duke of Bedford, after a short illness, had died at Rouen, in the very castle where he had imprisoned the heroic Maid. He paid this debt to nature on the 14th of September 1435; and on the 24th of the same month died Isabella of Bavaria, the mother of Charles VII. Thus were the two chief persons who helped to bring about the disgraceful treaty of Troyes removed from all possibility of making any fresh opposition to the rightful claims of the heir to the throne of France.

The Parisians were overwhelmed with joy at the news, as it was to Bedford they attributed the continuance of the war. The renewal of hostilities, however, was certain after the conference was broken up; for the garrisons of Charles, under Richmond's authority, had the command of the Upper and Lower Seine. Paris was held within an iron girdle of fortresses, and was soon as much distressed as it had been in the year 1418 under the Armagnac faction. The English tyrannic governors were determined to make a vigorous resistance; and if any one murmured, or their orders were disobeyed, the offending person was tied up in a sack and thrown into the Seine, or in some other way murdered.

At this time there was in Paris a noted *bourgeois*, Michael Laillier, who in former days for some offence had been sent into exile, and had lately returned in the hope that his fault was forgotten. He contrived during the night to send beyond the walls a trustworthy person with a secret communication to Richmond, to tell him on the

next Friday morning to present himself before the Gate St. Jacques, and he, Laillier, would let him into Paris, if the Constable would previously promise that all which he had done against the King should be forgiven. The Constable, who had provided himself with 'letters of indemnity,' gave him the assurance required. In this, and in every step of the great enterprise, Richmond showed his admirable tact and forethought.

He next selected sixty lances on whom he could depend, and set off to join Dunois and a noble captain named L'Isle Adam, who offered to assist with four hundred picked archers. All was carefully arranged; every man knew what was to be his duty and his station. The four hundred crossed the Seine, and formed an ambuscade without the walls. The mounted lances followed in the evening, and remained on the alert all night. At sunrise on Friday, the 13th of April, the Constable and his party came within a mile of Paris. Here he received information that his enterprise was discovered; but this did not prevent his following it up, and hastening to join the ambuscade. Some of the horsemen then drew near the strangely named Porte d'Enfer. A man on the ramparts called out to them, 'Not here; go to the Gate St. Jacques; this will not be opened.' They advanced to the gate as directed.

'Who goes there?' demanded the watch.

'It is the Constable.'

The watch, no doubt, was Michael Laillier, as he begged to have a renewal of the promise of pardon. Richmond

again satisfied him. Much caution was now observed. The wicket, or small door at the side of the great gates, was opened; the Constable and his party passed in. Instantly they tore away the iron bars, threw open the great gates, and the mounted cavaliers rushed in, exclaiming as they did so: 'Peace! Peace! Live King Charles and the Duke of Burgundy!' The revolt became general, all ranks flew to arms, and the white cross of France and that of St. Andrew — insignia long adverse — were now united against the red cross and the St. George of England.[1]

Lord Willoughby, then in command in Paris, the Bishop of Terouenne, and the Provost Morhier, were suddenly called to action. As speedily as they could, they got together some men, and proved neither wanting in courage nor energy to preserve the city. The chains were placed across the streets, the tocsin sounded, and the cry, 'To arms, the French are upon us!' was heard in every quarter. The Lieutenant of the Provost, Jean L'Archer, 'one of the most cruel of Christians,' as he is styled by the old chronicler, went towards the Gate of St. Martin, crying 'St. George! St. George! the French are upon us: you are all dead men!'

Four or five thousand had now passed within the walls, some by the gates; others, mounting the ramparts by ladders, had turned their own cannon upon Lord Willoughby and his troops, saluting them with a shower

[1] H. Martin, vol. vii. p. 348; Monstrelet, vol. vii. p. 327.

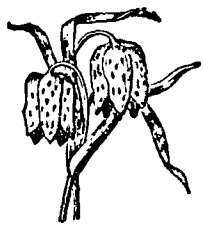
of balls. They made a hasty retreat, and as they passed along received upon their heads from the windows—the women helping with all their might—stones, sticks, brooms, tables, chairs, or whatever first came to hand. The onset had been so rapid, that the Constable, who was at the Gate St. Jacques, found the victory gained before he could fancy the strife was well begun. The fact was, that the eagerness of the Parisians was so great to shake off the English yoke, that a vast number opened their doors to welcome the French as deliverers.

The *bourgeois* journalist is warm in his expressions of delight on the occasion. He says: 'Soon after came the Constable and the other lords, quite gently, as if all their lives they had never passed out of Paris. This was a miracle, for two hours before their entrance their intention was to put us all to the sword if we opposed them. But many of the people of Paris were very good Christians, and had gone into the churches; and truly now it appeared that Monsieur Saint Denis had been an advocate for the city: for, when the French entered therein, they were moved to joy and tears, and Monsieur the Constable said, "My good citizens, King Charles thanks you a hundred thousand times, and I on his part, that you have so gently rendered up the lady city of his kingdom. If any one, of whatever condition he may be, has done amiss towards the King, let him know that he is fully pardoned."'

Lord Willoughby and his English, who had taken shelter in the Bastille, demanded terms of capitulation; they were

granted. Richmond, whose patriotic spirit always preferred the public to his private interests, imposed on them a heavy ransom, and applied the money to carrying on the war. The captives vacated the Bastille on the 17th of April. The Parisians crowded the ramparts to see them go, 'and for certain,' says the *bourgeois* chronicler, 'there never was people so mocked and hooted as they were, more especially the man who was the most culpable in oppressing the poor common people. Everybody hooted and cried "The Fox" (*au renard*) after the Bishop of Terounne, the Chancellor.'[1]

[1] *Journal de Paris*, pp. 166 and 167.



CHAPTER XVI.

Submission of Paris—revives Memory of the Maid's great Deeds—the false Joan of Arc—Charles detects her Imposture—Charles heads his Troops and takes Montereau—Louis fights by his Father's Side—Charles enters Paris in Triumph—departs for the South—the Skinners—their Violence—Richmond treated with Ingratitude—Paris suffering from Sickness and Famine—Charles and his Constable go to Bourges—summon a Council—Proceedings—Pragmatic Sanction—Richmond's great Reform of the Army—Louis troublesome—discontented Nobles join him—rebellious Movement suppressed—Alexander de Bourbon punished for his Crimes.

THE submission of Paris, and the expulsion of those who had so long tyrannized over the city, were celebrated by two grand clerical processions of thankfulness to God; and the public functionaries marched in their robes, bearing wax tapers, to join the solemn services of the Church. These events recalled to the minds of the most serious the prophetic words of the martyred Jeanne, that the English should be driven from the land, and at no distant period their exodus would be complete.

The memory of Jeanne's great deeds could now be commented upon without fear, and a report speedily grew

out of this revival of them that the Maid was not dead. The wishes of the people helped their credulity, till at length it was asserted that she had never been burnt at all, and some one else had suffered at Rouen in her stead. Strange to say, in May 1436 a woman who bore a remarkable likeness to Jeanne took advantage of this report, and presented herself before Jeanne's brothers at Metz, declaring she was their sister.

It seems that one of the brothers was deceived, and acknowledged her. The Duchess of Luxembourg, who had been grieved by the conduct of her nephew, Jean de Luxembourg, in selling the Maid to the English, was so overcome with joy, that she gave a splendid reception to the impostor at Arlon; and the people of Orleans (considering Jeanne's preservation as a miracle) sent a herald to congratulate her on her safety, whilst the brother who was deceived went forthwith to announce her return to Charles at Loches.

The impostor, however, showed much caution as well as cunning; and thinking nothing would render her so safe as cheating the Pope, set off for Rome instead of Loches. She was so far successful, that his Holiness did not oppose her purpose of fighting for him against the Duke of Milan. She did so, and was reported to have fought well and killed two soldiers in battle. She did not long remain in Italy, but returned to France, and in 1438 fought against the English in the marshes of Poitou and Guyenne. Whilst there she wrote to the King of Castile,

requesting assistance; and the Spanish Constable showed her letters to the cavaliers, as relics, calling them those of the Maid Jeanne.

She next presented herself at Orleans, where she was enthusiastically received; feasted, enriched, and almost worshipped by the citizens. She openly declared that, three years before this, she had married the Sire Armoies, a gentleman of Metz, who did not accompany her in her wanderings. There was much doubt about the truth of her story at the Court of Charles. Nor did she venture to show herself there till some time after her return from Orleans. A hint had been given her how to know the King, as he was to wear ordinary attire, when she came to Court, that she might pick him out as the real Jeanne had done on being first presented to him at Chinon. Charles was surprised at her saluting him as her sovereign; but he did not lose his presence of mind, as he said: 'Damsel, my friend, you are welcome. In the name of God, who knows the secret between us, welcome.'

At hearing this, the woman became so confounded by terror, that she fell on her knees, implored the King's pardon, and confessed the imposture. Charles sent her to the Parliament at Paris, where judgment was passed on her by that august body. Certainly her punishment was lenient—to stand on the marble table at the palace, whilst she was proclaimed an impostor, and after being preached at, to be dismissed. Voltaire, who treats her story as a most daring imposition, says there were two other

women who met with some success by passing themselves off for the Maid of Orleans.

On the 25th June 1436 Charles witnessed the marriage of Louis the Dauphin at Tours with the Princess Margaret, the daughter of the justly celebrated James I. of Scotland. They were little more than children in age; for the Dauphin was but sixteen years old, and his bride twelve. The historian Chartier says they were splendidly dressed, and looked very pretty; and observes, that at the festivities which followed, the Archbishop of Rheims, who performed the ceremony, had a place assigned him above the King.

Some time after this event, Richmond and Dunois having determined on the subjection of Montereau, as the recovery of that town would add to the security of Paris, Charles declared his intention to lead the enterprise in person. He did so, and commenced the siege with six thousand men. And after some weeks' close investment, Montereau was taken by storm, in which 'Charles did his duty like any other man;' and though the town was pillaged, as towns were in those days, it was much to the credit of the royal victor that he ordered no personal injury should be offered to man or woman, and that the churches and monasteries should be respected. The garrison had taken shelter in the Castle; but the cannon of Charles so furiously assailed the walls, that the besieged were obliged to yield. The French part of the garrison were hanged as traitors, the

English spared at the request of the Dauphin. Thus did the future terrible Louis XI., who had that day fought well by his father's side, commence his career by an act of mercy. The Parisians did not approve it. They said that, by sparing the English, he had let loose upon them three hundred robbers and murderers, and they refused to ring their bells for the capture of Montereau.[1]

Charles, in order to win over the Parisians to good humour, made a royal entry into their city. He rode with the Dauphin by his side; both were attired in silver armour. The Dauphin was bareheaded, but the King wore a circlet of silversmith's work of great price. The housings of his horse, of dark velvet with the *fleur de lis* in gold, touched the ground, and the head-piece of the steed waved with feathered plumes. The Grand Equerry bore the helmet surrounded by a jewelled crown. Mountjoie, King-at-arms carried the shield, and a standard representing St. Michael was borne aloft; the device being that of the martyred Jeanne, adopted after she declared that St. Michael had appeared to her as the protector of France. The Provost of the merchants, and the sheriffs with their retinue, came out to meet the King, and presented him with the keys of the city. The Governor and all the legal officials welcomed their sovereign; and next a very singular company paid their respects to him—the Seven Virtues and the Seven Deadly Sins, each mounted and dressed in character. These were followed by the

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont;* Monstrelet, vol. viii. p. 31.

judges and the Parliament, and at the Gate of St. Denis three singing angels were seen supporting the shield of France. The public rejoicings were great, and lasted many days.

These ended, Charles soon tired of his capital. Half ruined by the wars of the rival kings, and not having had time for recovery, it looked as wretched as it really was, and altogether a very dull place. Charles loved the easy, the pleasant, and the beautiful; the sight of misery gave him pain, and to remedy it gave him trouble, and that he shunned as he best could. Early therefore in December he departed for the cheerful cities of the Loire, and his splendid home at Bourges. 'He left us,' says the recording *bourgeois*, 'without doing any good to Paris.' The winter of 1437 was severe, and great distress was experienced by the people. A set of adventurers, able in the use of arms, were among the most formidable of Charles' soldiery. They cared little about making war on the English, unless there was a prospect of a good spoil; but they fleeced the French peasantry without mercy, and to such a degree, that the poor people gave them the name of the *Skinners* (*Ecorcheurs*). Richmond determined, as far as he could, to suppress this military banditti, and to induce Charles to organize a complete reformation of his army, and lost not a day in setting about his measures for that purpose; but he needed support. Richmond was sorely tried: he had made a thousand enemies by his patriotic reforms; and to so serious an

extent was the opposition now carried on against him, that he was driven to appeal to the King for justice and support. Charles never liked his Constable, and he did nothing; but when did he ever exert himself to serve a faithful subject who had served him? Richmond, with all his faults, displayed a most unselfish patriotism. No neglect, no party malice, no ingratitude, could abate it. All that he possessed, his very life, was devoted to the service of the King and his country. On all sides was he ill requited. Even the Parisians, who had hailed him as their deliverer from a foreign yoke, cast upon him the foul deeds of the Skinners (the very men he most abhorred): why had he not entirely suppressed them at once?

The misery of this winter, as described by Monstrelet, must have exceeded anything that had been experienced for nearly a century. The autumn was a season of rains and floods, that drowned the cattle and destroyed the harvest. Famine, epidemic fever, and the barbarity of the ruffian troops, followed in the train of woe. The chronicler says that there died in Paris five thousand in the Hôtel Dieu, and forty-five thousand in the city: that it was a desert so desolate, that the wolves came up the Seine by night, and strangled and devoured many persons.

To return from this scene of desolation, we have now to mention two events which ultimately were of great advantage to the kingdom. The first was the resolution of Charles and his Council to free the Sate from the long-gathering encroachments of the Popedom.

During the middle ages, the Holy See claimed and exercised the privilege of extending its power over the temporalities as well as the spiritualities of Christendom. A country could be laid under an interdict; a king could be denounced or dethroned, independent of any interference on the part of his people; and though this power was protested against, and not unfrequently resisted, still it remained a principle. He who claimed to hold the keys to open or to shut the gates of heaven to all on earth, held in absolute subjection thousands who 'believed and trembled;' and even those having less religious fear, liked not the danger or the inconvenience which resulted from any revolt against the head of the Church. The Court of Rome, by its unity and its wonderful organization, extended its policy to the remotest corner of the earth. The Pope, generally chosen from among men 'grown old in the affairs of State,' holding the highest rank above all princes, needing no struggle to gain and seldom to secure power, was never drawn away from the object he had in view by those impulses of passion or changes of purpose by which younger or less established potentates are governed. The Council of his Holiness, formed of cardinals,—men, like himself, of one spirit, and devoted to their order,—obeyed his behests. It might be said of such a council (observed a celebrated French writer), as it once was said by a stranger on entering the Roman Senate, 'I see a consistory of kings.'

In the year 1438, Charles being at his favourite palace

of Bourges, attended by his archbishops and bishops, abbots, priors, council, and many of his chief nobles, proposed the consideration of such ecclesiastical matters as affected the prosperity of the realm, without touching on any doctrinal points whatever; the object being to remedy the abuses that had crept into the kingdom during the long course of the late disastrous warfare and disorder. The sitting of these learned persons ended by drawing up a code which was called a *Pragmatic Sanction*, somewhat founded on the code of the Good St. Louis. The principal clauses were these:—That, with a few exceptions, the Pope should no longer appoint those who were to fill the highest dignities in the Church of France. That appeals to Rome should only be made on special occasions. That excommunications and interdicts should only be fulminated against persons proved guilty of the foulest offences. That all popes should be subject to a general council; and, to prevent disorders and disputes of all descriptions, a general council should be held every ten years. That, copied from the decisions of the Council of Basle, henceforth there be a limit to the nomination of cardinals, twenty-four to become the standing number. It was from this code, the result of the meeting at Bourges, that the French ecclesiastical writers date the liberties of the Gallican Church, there being no such liberties in the Churches of Italy and Spain.

For the second benefit, the kingdom was principally indebted to Richmond; it was beyond all price—the Re-

form of the Army. It was time that something should be done to check the fearful state of things which arose from the monstrous crimes of the ruffians, calling themselves soldiers, whose wanderings desolated the land. It might be said that beyond the walls of every town there was an invasion of barbarians; or, as it was expressed by an historian of the time, 'France was overrun with a swarm of the damned, let loose from hell to commit crimes hitherto unknown on earth.'

Charles and his Council, in which Richmond took the lead, at length determined to put an end to this system altogether; and they speedily produced a Code of Reformation, of which the following are the principal points:— The commander of each battalion to be nominated by the sovereign. The pay of every man-at-arms to be regularly made at an appointed time; plunder and pillage strictly forbidden and punished. The captains of companies to be held responsible for the excesses of their men. The lords of castles who kept troops for their defence, to pay them regularly, so as to prevent the necessity of pillage, or to disband them. And no rank to be exempt from these decrees.

The nobles, knights, and most especially the old tyrannical barons, murmured at such restrictions, for it must be confessed many of them loved plunder as well as did their men. They said: 'What! were they to carry on a war and not to profit by it? Were chivalrous gentlemen to be held responsible for the acts of their men? Were they

to risk their lives to restore a kingdom to their Prince, and not live as free as they did in the time of their fathers?' So angered were some of the worst of these nobles, that, led by their discontents, they made advances to a very apt subject for anything that was mischievous or evil—to the Dauphin Louis, then eighteen years old.

He had already shown ability for business, both civil and military, and was by no means deficient in personal courage; but with these qualities he combined a spirit of dark and subtle ambition, and passions warm for evil, but cold towards what was good. Selfish, deceitful, suspicious, and vindictive, he gained no friends, because he considered every one his enemy. Those he called his friends were his tools—low, mean persons, of whom he required services that better men would have scorned. It was truly said of Louis, 'that he had the vices of a strong, whilst his father had those of a weak character.' 'He resembled him in nothing,' says Henri Martin, 'but in the coldness of his heart and his libertine propensities.'

It is surprising to find that such brave and generally honourable men as the Duke de Bourbon, Alençon, and Dunois, joined a party headed by the Dauphin and the wretched La Trémoille, in opposition to the King and the truly beneficial reforms he had enacted. 'I know,' said Louis, 'that I am as well able to do what is proper for the kingdom as any one else, and will not thus be held under rule.'

There can be no doubt that Dunois sided with the Prince

prompted by his feelings of jealousy for the superiority in ability and station of the Constable. Alençon, though fiery in the field when his blood was up, was but feeble in character, easily prejudiced and led by those who were authoritative and decisive, for good or evil. The head of the plot, in its origin, was La Trémoille, who, having regained his liberty, fancied this affair would lead to his also regaining power, if the Constable could but be got rid of or disgraced. To add to Charles' troubles, a number of the discontented noblesse of Poitiers joined the rebel movement, which began to wear a most threatening aspect. 'Take the field, sire,' said Richmond to his royal master. 'Remember the fate of Richard II. of England. Do not suffer yourself to be shut up either in town or castle; lead your men-at-arms, and crush at once this rebellious movement before it becomes formidable in the land.'[1]

Charles followed the advice of his Constable. Neither the Dauphin nor his companions expected vigour such as this. To give in detail all particulars would fill many pages; but let us briefly say that the insurrectionary spirit was most effectually quelled, the leaders made prisoners, and the Dauphin sharply reproved. The nobles, such as Bourbon, Alençon, and Dunois, were glad enough to be allowed to make their submission, and Charles was wise in pardoning them; for thus, freed from the apprehension of a civil strife that would have been of most serious consequence in the present state of his kingdom, he continued

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont;* Monstrelet.

to reform many of those abuses which had so injuriously crept into it. But his Council considered that it would be well, in order if possible to satisfy the restless and dangerous ambition of Louis, to give him some employment, and recommended Charles to bestow on his troublesome son the principality of Dauphiny. Charles did so under certain restrictions, which that son soon ceased to observe, and ruled and tyrannized like an independent Prince. The conduct of Louis was the more unpardonable, as he possessed abilities which, turned to a good account, would have benefited both himself and the realm he had in prospect. The following instance of his spirit in the field (though we are anticipating in point of date its occurrence) will show that Louis was apt for war, and desirous to be engaged in it.

We have already mentioned a set of soldiers, called the Skinners, which Richmond was determined, if possible, to reclaim or extirpate. In the hope to lessen their barbarities, he had induced them to accept service and pay as regular troops. The Dauphin wished for the command of these ruffians, and it was given to him. Always restless, he immediately offered to assist the Emperor against the revolted Swiss. His services were accepted; and soon after, a furious battle, in which Louis showed no want of courage or skill as a general, was fought at St. Jacques, near Basle, where sixteen hundred Swiss attacked the army of the Dauphin numbering several thousand men. The brave mountaineers displayed the spirit of a desperate

heroism: they would neither give nor receive quarter. It is recorded that every Swiss perished in the battle, or lay mortally wounded at its close. The French lost eight thousand men; and these being for the greater part the bands of the marauding Skinners, their loss was considered the greatest possible gain to the country. So likewise was an act of justice which occurred when Charles marched with his troops towards Champagne, and which did great service to his cause.

There was one Alexander de Bourbon, bastard brother of the Duke, who from his monstrous crimes had become the horror of the people. He had been the intimate associate of the Dauphin, and did much to corrupt and lead him into debauchery, discontent, and rebellion. This wretch had lately barbarously used and murdered a poor young woman. It was deemed necessary to make him an example of the King's justice. He was accordingly seized, and Richmond obtained an order from Charles to hand him over to Tristan L'Hermite. That particular friend of Louis made very short work with him. He tied him up in a sack and threw him into the river Aube. The punishment of this man had the most salutary effect: it showed that no rank was safe from the laws in doing evil.

About this period of the reign of Charles an incident occurred so characteristic of the age, and so remarkable, that it must not be passed unnoticed.

CHAPTER XVII.

The ancient Castle of Nantes—Remarkable Trial in the Great Hall there, 1440—the Duke of Brittany—the Grand Inquisitor—the Ceremony—De Retz accused of Sorcery—Circumstances of the Crime—his Sentence and Execution—Dissensions between Beaufort and Gloucester—Duchess of the latter accused of Sorcery—her Penance—Marriage of Henry VI.—Truce between England and France—Joy of the People—Death of the Wife of Louis—Richmond—Dunois—Alençon—their Conquests in Normandy—Rouen holds out—at last surrenders—Talbot and others Prisoners—Terms between the English and the victorious French.

IN the ancient city of Nantes in Brittany, stood what, at the time of which we write, might almost have been called a modern structure, and what in our days may yet be viewed in its strong and venerable remains—the Castle of Nantes. It was built in the fourteenth century: a noble pile, defended by round and massive towers. Its arched gateway showed the teeth of its portcullis, ready to fall on whomsoever might dare to pass beneath for a hostile purpose; nor was it wanting in those dungeons and stone cells, the usual accompaniments of feudal power.

It was in the year 1440 that a scene too remarkable ever to be forgotten—and especially recorded by Monstrelet—

passed within the walls of that stupendous fortress, to which we now propose to conduct the reader.

A lofty and vaulted hall, dim from its extent, and imperfectly lighted by narrow pointed windows placed high overhead, had an appearance of more than usual gloom. At the end stood a richly carved chair cushioned with velvet, and overhung by a canopy. The seats to the right and left were partially filled by the chief nobles of Brittany in their robes of State. In the centre was a table covered with black cloth. Around it were several benches, some vacant, but others already filled by persons in ecclesiastical as well as civil habits. Parchments, papers, inkhorns, etc., were before them; they seemed engaged in examining documents, and spoke in an under-voice to each other. The municipal authorities of Nantes were seated by themselves. Citizens and several women were present. No one spoke, save in low whispers; the hushed silence that reigned around had in it that pause of awe which in a large assembly fills the mind with expectation.

At length there was a stir without; the tread of horses, the clash of arms, were followed by the peal of the trumpet. The heavy doors were thrown back, and Francis, the well-known, severe, and proud Duke of Brittany, entered, richly dressed and jewelled, attended by the chief officers of his Court. All rose, as with a slow and stately step he passed on to the chair beneath the canopy.

The next movement without was again announced by the trumpet, and again the doors were opened to admit

the ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries. They were preceded by the cross-bearer of the Bishop of Nantes, carrying aloft the high and sacred emblem. The Bishop in full pontificals followed: on his right hand walked the Vicar of the Inquisition for the city, followed by the canons and clergy of the Cathedral, and the officials of the Inquisition, in black gowns, with a cross on the breast, each bearing a lighted taper. The Grand Judge of Brittany, full robed, accompanied by men of the law, came last, as on this occasion the principal judge was to co-operate with the ecclesiastical powers. The chief personages were marshalled to their appointed seats. The Vicar of the Inquisition attracted much notice. He was more than sixty years of age, his deportment dignified, his countenance grave and earnest, whilst the raised brow, and the mouth that seemed as if a muscle could never be relaxed, denoted pride and self-importance. All the preliminaries being made, on a sign from the chief notary, an official left the apartment. Again there was the hush of expectation. The sound of approaching footsteps met the ear from without a side door, before which there was a vacant space barred off from the rest of the hall.

Every eye fixed itself on that side door; the interest felt by all was deep and solemn; many shuddered, and some wept. Well might it be so, for on that day the Lord Gilles de Retz, one of the chief nobles, and a relative of the Duke of Brittany, a Marshal of France, and as such, by permission of the King, was to be arraigned on a

charge of sorcery. The door grated on its hinges; it was not often opened, for it stood at the top of the steps that led down to the dungeons. Conducted by two familiars of the Inquisition, and surrounded by guards, the prisoner entered. The very breath of every one seemed suspended, as they surveyed him, nobleman in birth, demon in life, who now stood before the bar of temporal judgment to answer to a charge of hitherto unheard of crimes. His deportment was serious, but unabashed. He bowed to the Duke, and then sat down. No portrait of De Retz has come down to us, but we can imagine his countenance from his deeds. It must have been hard and revolting, from the sternness of cruelty. 'The most depraved imagination,' says Henri Martin, 'could never have dreamed of the horrors which this trial brought to light; De Retz was a Moloch in human form.'

The evidence was overwhelming, confirming the criminal's previous examination and confession. But so dreadful were the circumstances, that the chroniclers of the time forbear to give any very minute details. It appeared that in the châteaux of Choutocé, of Suze, and others, belonging to the Lord de Retz in Brittany, had been found the bones of one hundred and forty children—some in the towers of the buildings, others thrown down into the wells. These had been murdered by De Retz, with the assistance of two sorcerers, one an Italian, the other an Englishman. The children had been enticed away, or carried off wherever they could be found in

towns, villages, or country, and sacrificed to the powers of darkness. De Retz acknowledged that the blood of these victims was employed in writing incantations of a diabolical nature, to obtain fortune and honours, knowledge and power. At last these demons in human form became so accustomed to murder, that as animals having tasted blood are said to thirst for it, so De Retz and his companions murdered for the enjoyment of the deed.

One circumstance was singularly characteristic in an age of superstition. De Retz did not believe he should ever become a subject of the infernal regions, because he averred that in all his sorcery dealings he had always avoided giving his soul in any compact with the devil. On being arrested, he confessed his deeds. For the sake of example in the punishment of crimes so dreadful, it was determined to make the trial as public as possible at Nantes. De Retz was condemned to be hanged until dead, and his body to be afterwards burnt to ashes. Before he ascended the scaffold, he carefully fulfilled all the duties enjoined by the priests who prepared him for death; took an affectionate leave of the Italian sorcerer, and made an appointment to meet him in Paradise! The lookers-on were much edified by his pious end. The sentence was carried out; but before the body could be half burnt, some ladies, who were related to the criminal, begged the Duke of Brittany not to let it be entirely consumed, but to allow them to have the remains in order to place them in holy ground. Their prayer was granted,

and these ladies caused what the flames had spared of this monster in iniquity, after a solemn service, to be buried in the Church of the Carmelites.

The trial of De Retz in Latin still exists in the archives of the municipality of Nantes. In our times, it has been pronounced to be too dreadful for translation.[1] What must be the revelations it contains, when they were deemed, even in their own 'age of iron,' bloodshed, and iniquity, too horrible for detail? If all the sorcerers in the middle ages were like these human demons, we cannot wonder that fire and faggot became their doom. Certain it is, that the pretended adepts in the black art used every means in their power to raise terror and amazement in the credulous. They professed to have a demon who attended upon them, who could call up the dead and perform miraculous services, but only for evil, and bestowed no favours but at the price of souls.[2]

Everything about this period seemed to turn in favour of Charles; for, while affairs in England were becoming worse and worse, those in France were rapidly improving. Henry VI., religious, merciful, and good, but feeble in mind and unresisting in temper, would have made an admirable mediæval saint, but was utterly unfit for a ruler. His passive easiness did more harm to his kingdom, by his giving way to a set of selfish, violent men, than the tyranny of a more resolute spirit could possibly have

[1] See Murray's *Handbook of France*, Article 'Nantes.'

[2] Monstrelet, vol. viii.

effected. Two factions threatened England, and, as usual, the stronger weighed down the weaker. Gloucester succumbed to Winchester, the wretched Cardinal persuading the poor King that his uncle Gloucester was plotting against his life in order to seize his crown!

It was an age of belief in all that was fabulous and monstrous. No superstition could be too strange for the credulous. By the malice and contrivance of the Cardinal, Henry was made to believe that Gloucester's wife, assisted by her confederates in evil, had formed an image of wax to represent him; and as it wasted away before a slow fire, so would he decline by wasting sickness. The Duchess was accused of sorcery. She was bad enough certainly, being the woman with whom Gloucester lived as his mistress before the Pope set him free from his first bonds, when he married her. She was sentenced to do penance, barefooted, clad in a white sheet, with a burning taper in her hand.[1]

The next step taken by Beaufort was to provide the passive King with a wife. One was chosen for him, not among the enemies, but among the connections of France. If the sword could not avail to keep that country under, a more friendly policy perhaps might do something towards it. Margaret of Anjou, daughter of the accomplished Prince René, Duke of Anjou and King of Sicily, was the lady. Margaret resembled her father in nothing but his handsome face. She was only fifteen years old, but soon

[1] Hollingshed, p. 622.

showed a violent spirit combined with much unscrupulous ability. This ill-starred marriage brought with it no lasting peace for England; but Beaufort, knowing how ill the country was prepared for war, by a skilful management of the wedding negotiations, brought about a truce for twenty-two months between the two countries.

This, after nearly thirty years of strife, was such a novelty, such a joy, that the excitable French were wild with delight. People long pent up in beleaguered towns and fortresses, who had never looked on the face of nature, were now like poor birds let loose from the cage, and went forth in crowds to see the neighbouring fields and villages. With whomsoever they met, whether French or English, they were gay and social,—a certain proof that they were more disposed for peace than for fighting. 'A wonderful thing indeed,' says the old chronicler, 'and only to be ascribed to God! Those even who before were pleased with a merciless shedding of blood, now, by an inexplicable love of peace, joined in the dances and the feasts, and formed friendly connections with their former enemies, however cruel they might have been.'

The people thus gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the present hour, but the French Government had other thoughts and views. With them, the truce was nothing more than a respite to be employed in the most vigorous preparations for the renewal of the war, which should be one of extermination for the English.

In the midst of this, a great misfortune befell the

Dauphin (though perhaps he was incapable of feeling it as such), in the death of his amiable young wife, Margaret of Scotland, after only a few days' illness. While she lived, although her husband's jealousy and meanness deeply wounded her, yet, by her goodness and fine tact, she managed to keep the peace between father and son; so that under her guidance they were at least outwardly civil. But the moment she was gone, the war began anew; and Louis speedily married again a very young girl, Charlotte of Savoy, contrary to Charles' wishes. Hence arose for a time a new cause of strife.

These unhappy dissensions did not produce any serious changes in the Government, which showed great stability and an unwavering purpose; for though the truce with England was renewed from time to time, there was no relaxation in the preparations for the recovery of Normandy.

Those valiant generals, Richmond, Alençon, and Dunois, pressed the King to seize a most favourable opportunity that presented itself at this time, when the Duke of Brittany entreated Charles to send him aid to recover certain possessions which the English had wrested from him. The army, the Council, and even the people, as with one voice cried: 'To arms, to arms! extirpate the English; cast them out from our land!' To this cry Charles at length responded; the Duke of Brittany and his barons added to their entreaty the assurance that they would faithfully serve him against the English; and Richmond, who was nearly related to the Duke, at once placed himself

at the head of a strong Breton force ready to take the field.

Charles made no demur, and wished to march forward; but the means were wanting to do so—his exchequer was very low. He applied to some of his nobles, whom he had enriched, for a loan. All refused on frivolous pretences; but when he addressed himself to that loyal merchant, Jacques Cœur, he was nobly answered, 'Sire, all I have is yours;' and he gave the King two hundred thousand crowns in gold towards the recovery of Normandy.

This was enough; the war was renewed with spirit. There was no lack of men-at-arms, with all that might be required to give efficiency to an army. Part bore aloft the standard and uttered the war-cry of Brittany; but they failed not to serve France, and seized Pont de L'Arche and many other places in Normandy. So well were the several forces combined, that the Constable and his Bretons were everywhere victorious, and the English were driven out from nearly every city. Charles, as he passed from town to town throughout his regained dominions, was hailed with the 'Noel, Noel' of enthusiastic welcome.

Rouen, the scene of Jeanne's martyrdom, was the most important refractory city. The principal English generals and governors had fled within its walls, and there proposed to hold out. The King and his Council were at Pont de L'Arche; and on learning this, they despatched a herald to summon Rouen to surrender. The herald was brutally repulsed and threatened with death, 'which,' says an old

chronicler, 'was contrary to all the usages of chivalry.' That famous city was not easily to be conquered. Within its walls was old John Talbot, who defended them with extraordinary vigour; and even after the city was subdued, he retired to the fortress of the ancient palace.

All resistance, however, proved vain; the citizens in a body declared for capitulation; and Charles, who was desirous to win back both cities and people by pardon and indulgence, granted liberal terms. He also consented that the English should depart uninjured, on condition of giving up all the towns they held in Normandy, and paying a ransom of fifty thousand crowns in gold; Talbot and certain other of the great English nobles to be held as hostages till these terms were fulfilled. Some demur arose on the part of the governor of Honfleur, who, when the other places yielded, refused to surrender; and therefore Talbot, held in the highest honour by Charles and his chivalrous company, remained as the most valuable hostage for a considerable time.

Rich gifts were presented to Charles by the principal citizens, with the humble petition that he would be graciously pleased to pursue his ancient enemies the English, and drive them entirely out. Charles promised to do so, and granted many privileges to the good city of Rouen. Having arranged that the hostages were to be liberated as soon as the terms agreed upon were fulfilled, he appointed Sir Pierre de Brezé, Seneschal of Poitou, and governor of the regained city, and soon after departed.[1]

[1] Monstrelet, vol. ix.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Charles goes to Jumieges—Death of Agnes Sorel—Monuments to her Memory—the Court of Charles becomes more corrupt in Morals—Madame de Villequier—Normandy conquered—the South brought to Submission—Revision of the Sentence of Joan of Arc—her Mother demands it—Evidence of her Career—Reversal of the Sentence—her Character declared spotless—Jacques Cœur—his Noble Acts—Envy of the Courtiers—Plot to bring about his Ruin—falsely accused—tried and condemned—he escapes Prison—the Pope protects him—his Death—Letter to Charles—the King touched by it—restores his Forfeited Property to his Children.

CHARLES, finding that the terms of the treaty were not fulfilled, in consequence of the Governor of Honfleur persisting in his refusal to give up the town, ordered that it should be reduced by siege, and went himself to the Abbey of Jumieges, about eighteen miles from Rouen.

Whilst he was there, after giving birth to her fourth child by the King, died Agnes Sorel. As her end approached, she expressed much repentance for her sinful life, and remarked to the wife of the Seneschal de Brezé, 'that our fragile body, of whose beauty we are so proud, is but worthless dust.' She then desired her confessor to

give her a full absolution for all her sins, in a special form in which she asserted she had received it at Loches. He hesitated, but at length complied with her request. We are not told what was this unusual form of pardon. Shortly after she called on God and the blessed Virgin, uttered a loud cry of agony, and expired. Her heart was given to the Abbey of Jumieges; the rest of her remains were taken with great honour to Loches, and interred in the collegiate church to which she had been a benefactress. Much of the wealth bestowed on her by the King she had given to the sick and poor, and the churches. Her loss, therefore, was much deplored.

Charles spared no cost to do honour to her remains. Her funeral was almost regal in its ceremonial, and he raised two noble monuments to her memory. The one, at Jumieges, was destroyed in the wars of the Huguenots; the other, adorned by an effigy of the deceased lady beautifully sculptured, was broken to pieces by the ignorant and barbarous French (more barbarous than in the darkest days of the fifteenth century) in the Revolution of 1794.

Though Charles was thus prodigal in the respect he paid to the manes of the Lady of Beauty, her death brought no serious reflections to his mind—no reformation in his conduct. A greater scandal than before disgraced his Court, in the person of one who had all the faults, and none of the better qualities, of Agnes. We speak of the niece of the deceased mistress, Antoinette de Maignelais,

who, for some time before the death of the unhappy woman, had somewhat supplanted her in the King's favour. Corruption had so eaten into the very heart of the Court, that Charles actually married this Antoinette to a poor gentleman, to whom he gave wealth and title—the Lord de Villequier; and made her the mistress of a troop of young girls, who were seduced from their friends, and placed under her instruction.[1] Monstrelet says that after the death of Agnes, and in his latter days, the King would have none but the handsomest women of the realm about him. The injurious influence of such morals in the sovereign, prevailed to a sad extent with the youth of the period. But though Charles was thus plunged into depravity, he did not return to his old habits of complete indolence. He joined the brave Dunois before Honfleur, and displayed the utmost courage and energy in the contest. The town soon yielded. This success was followed up by enterprise after enterprise, in many of which Charles was personally engaged, and showed bravery in the field and the most judicious policy after victory. In a few months, the very last castle or town in Normandy, hitherto in the possession of the English, was reduced to the obedience of Charles, by his valiant and experienced commanders.

The subduing of the south was a much harder task, and required a no less vigorous contest. Eleanor had brought Guienne in dower to Henry II. of England; and the English

[1] *Mémoires de Jacques du Clercq*, and Monstrelet.

had there gained so firm a footing, that it seemed almost impossible to drive them out. But the French were determined on conquest. Great was the energy of Richmond and his companions in arms: they worked wonders; and after much treasure and noble blood had been expended in the struggle, the south submitted, and the war was considered to be at an end. But a quarrel, principally about the exportation of wine to England, between Charles and the recovered provinces, went to such lengths, that all Guienne revolted. Many towns were besieged, and battles fought, before Charles was again the victor.

The attack on Castillon in 1453 was most fatal to the English, by the loss of their General, John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. This great warrior, then eighty-seven years old, mounted on a small horse on account of his age, his banner of the Holy Trinity unfurled before him, led on his men with his accustomed indomitable courage, ordering the lances to dismount and to carry by storm an entrenched camp held by the French before the walls of the town. He found, when it was too late, what he had not suspected, that the enemy were prepared with artillery to defend their entrenched post. Talbot's experienced eye saw at a glance the danger he had incurred by having advanced too far. The chroniclers relate that he paused a moment, and advised his son, the Lord Lisle, as he was a young soldier, to retreat; saying that for himself he would not tarnish his name by flight, and feared to cause

a panic among his men. But his son, kindred in spirit as in blood, refused to retreat.

> 'An' if I fly, I am not Talbot's son:
> Then talk no more of flight, it is no boot;
> If son to Talbot, die at Talbot's foot.'
>
> 'Then follow thou thy desperate sire;
> If thou wilt fight, fight by thy father's side;
> And, commendable prov'd, let's die in pride.'

Scarcely, as Shakspeare represents him, had the elder Talbot ceased speaking, when the whole range of artillery burst forth its fire and thunders, sweeping down the ranks of the advancing English. The horse that Talbot rode was killed by a ball, and (according to some writers) the veteran fell with both his thighs broken. His gallant son and thirty English barons resolved to save him. As he lay on the ground, they rallied round him, till, overwhelmed by numbers, the Lord Lisle and every one of these chivalrous men fell by the side of their helpless General. The French archers, like dogs that have brought the noble hart to bay, rushed in, and were dastardly enough, instead of making him prisoner, to despatch on the spot the venerable soldier, the glory of English chivalry.

For more than forty years he had been the scourge of France. Unlike too many of the other commanders,—though proud as any,—he was neither grasping, selfish, nor ambitious. He believed that the English had a right to keep what they possessed in France, and he fought for his country and his sovereign. His remains were brought

to England, and interred with great honour at Whitchurch, in Shropshire. On his tomb still lies the mutilated effigy of this heroic English warrior.[1]

Soon after this victory of Castillon, Bordeaux, so long the residence of Edward the Black Prince, and the birth-place of his unfortunate son Richard, surrendered, the last of the conquests of triumphant France. Her kingdom was now all her own, save that the solitary seaport of Calais was still English.[2]

The year 1453 restored freedom and independence to the descendants of 'the ancient people of Gaul.' The great work had been commenced by the heroic maid, Joan of Arc, and was continued till consummated by the wisdom of the council of the realm and the valour of the French commanders, and, though late, by the exertions of Charles himself. These events revived the recollection of the Maid's prophetic words; and a cry had been raised some time before, even in Rouen, that some expiation was due to her memory for the great crime of her burning.

Charles felt so too, but we fear not from any sense of remorse for his own ingratitude. He wished to be cleared of the charge, so constantly insisted upon by the English, that imposture and sorcery had been his auxiliaries, and that a heretic who invoked demons had conducted him to Rheims. We have ourselves the witness how deeply

[1] See Stothard's *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain;* and in that work, the late A. J. Kempe's interesting account of Talbot.

[2] *Histoire de France; Mémoires de Richemont;* Henri Martin; Barante; Monstrelet; Moreri.

these prejudices had taken root, when we find that our own Shakspeare—the poet who, of all others, could most adequately have depicted so noble a creature as Joan of Arc—has handed her down to us as a sorceress, a virago, and a harlot.[1]

After many plans, it was finally arranged to obtain the consent of the Pope to an inquiry to be made concerning the justice of the process and sentence by which Jeanne D'Arc, commonly called the Maid, had suffered death by burning at Rouen in 1431. The Articles of Inquiry were drawn up by a royal commission, dated February 1450; and immediately after, William Borville, Doctor of Theology, proceeded with the preparatory part of the business. He communicated with Jeanne's mother, who was still alive at Domremi, and with other parties.

A vast deal of time must have been expended in going to and from Rome, as nearly five years elapsed between the order for the commission and its result in the process.

With all these delays, it was not till the 7th November 1455 that the touching spectacle of the old and feeble mother of Jeanne, supported on the arm of her son Pierre, the brother who had fought by Jeanne's side and was taken with her at Compiègne, followed by a train of clergy, men of the law, nobles, and women of estate, entered the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris. With many tears, but

[1] See the First Part of *King Henry VI.* So strong was the English prejudice, that though Jeanne's beauty of person and countenance was universally commended, Hall, in his *Chronicles*, ascribes her purity of morals to what he calls her 'foul face.'

with a stedfast purpose, the aged mother demanded of those prelates who acted under the commission of the Pope to do justice to the memory of her daughter Jeanne D'Arc, accused and put to death on charges alike false and wicked in the city of Rouen.

Every one was deeply moved by a summons so solemnly uttered beneath the roof of the time-honoured Cathedral of Paris. The challenge made by the mother of Jeanne was allowed, but the proceedings were removed to Rouen. Cauchon was dead, and all the bitterest enemies of Jeanne were gone to their final account; no opposition therefore arose to the revision of the trial. The Pope's Legate, Cardinal D'Estouteville, assisted by Jean Brehal, undertook to preside at the inquiry at Rouen. The latter had previously travelled into many provinces to inquire into the life and conversation of Jeanne, and, under his direction, four different investigations were simultaneously opened—at Domremi, Orleans, Paris, and Rouen.

There were summoned to give evidence, those who had known the birth and childhood of the Maid — white-haired men and women, who had nursed her on their knees; women who, when children, had joined her in the dance and the song, under the sweet Lady Tree; those who had partaken of her kind neighbourly acts; and above all, those who had seen her pray, and knew how dearly she loved the services of the Church, and how she would make little presents to the sacristan to be more exact than he was sometimes in ringing the bell for

prayers; and they all bore witness how she loved the Virgin and the saints, more especially St. Catherine and St. Margaret, and would decorate their images with crowns and flowers; how kind she was to the sick and poor, and how careful to watch her father's flocks and aid her mother with the spindle and the needle. One and all deposed to her truthful, sincere, and religious character.

Her confessor in the warmest terms commended her piety, her strict sense of moral propriety, and the innocence of her mind. D'Aulon, her standard-bearer, Dunois, and a noble band of warriors who had fought by her side, bore testimony to the essential services she had rendered to the cause of her King and country, to the valour she invariably displayed in battle, and to the purity and innocence of her life. It would be impossible to describe the deep emotion which pervaded every bosom as witness after witness came forward, anxious to redeem from shame the memory of her who possessed the warmest heart, the bravest spirit, and the noblest mind that could distinguish woman,—woman who, when devoted to whatever is good, is in loveliness and purity only a little lower than the angels.

To the joy of every honest man, full though tardy justice was thus awarded to the memory of Joan of Arc. The records of the trial underwent long and close examination. The most important and the most minute circumstances were carefully sifted. Her questioning before the Doctors at Poitiers, her deliverance of the city of

Orleans, and the conducting of the King to be crowned at Rheims,—in fine, everything connected with her, down to the capture and the dreadful scenes at Rouen, were gone through with the utmost circumspection; and the result was the declaration that the trial or *procès* under which Jeanne D'Arc, commonly called the Maid of Orleans, suffered by fire at Rouen, was pronounced by the Inquisitor-General, by the Legate of the Pope, by cardinals, bishops, abbots, by all the highest authorities of the law, ecclesiastical and civil, to be altogether incorrect and illegal; and that, although the accused was under twenty-one years old, she was allowed no counsel; that the Articles drawn up against her were found to be corrupt, fraudulent, calumnious, and most maliciously framed from confessions made by Jeanne herself; that the judgments given against her, the first for perpetual imprisonment, and the last for death, were by the present Court of Inquiry annulled, and pronounced to be altogether void; that neither the said Jeanne D'Arc, nor her parents nor relatives, had on any occasion incurred any blot of infamy, from which they were hereby declared to be in every way exempt.

The tribunal directed that its decree should be forthwith made public; that a sermon be preached, and a solemn procession be conducted by the clergy at the Cemetery of St. Ouen, where Jeanne's false and unjust recantation had been forced upon her; and that the same ceremonies should be observed in the old market-place of Rouen, where she was horribly burnt alive; finally, that an

appropriate cross of stone should be erected on the spot where she suffered. These decrees were strictly carried out.

Orleans, on their being made public, called a general meeting; and the citizens raised a group of statues in bronze to the memory of their deliverer, which represented the Maid on her knees before the Virgin Mary, with an angel on each side. This group was placed on the bridge, but was broken during the religious wars; afterwards restored, and finally destroyed in the fearful Revolution of 1792. But our times have given us the finest memorial that art has yet raised to the heroic Maid—the statue at Versailles, where grace, purity, and beauty are exquisitely combined. In this work we trace the mind, pure and beautiful as her subject, of the nobly born and still more nobly endowed child of France, the daughter of its sovereign Louis Philippe, whose early death must ever be deplored by all who honour genius and goodness.

The restoration of Jeanne's reputation freed from the stains of sorcery and heresy, one would imagine, must have caused Charles to look back with regret, not unmingled with shame, for his cruel, indolent indifference in making no effort to save her after her capture. What were the feelings of his own heart are known to God alone, but to the eye of man there seemed no change in his cold and careless nature. An event which soon followed the scene we have just narrated, seems but too plainly to warrant our estimate of his selfish, thankless character.

We have already given a sketch of the remarkable

career of that extraordinary man, Jacques Cœur, the greatest merchant of his time in Europe. Jacques made a noble use of his fortune. Towards the conquests of Normandy and Guienne he gave more than four hundred thousand crowns in gold. By his reform of the currency, and his prudent administration of the finances, he strengthened the revenue for the purposes of the State.

Ennobled by Charles, Jacques continued deservedly in the King's favour. Great as were his public duties, he managed to render them compatible with his private affairs; and they prospered so rapidly, that his wealth became proverbial — 'as rich as Jacques Cœur.' The superstitious believed that he possessed the grand Arcanum, the secret of turning base metals into gold. Certainly nearly all the gold that came into France passed through his hands. 'The exchange,' says a celebrated French writer, 'and the external commerce were entirely dependent upon him.' Of his domestic splendour, and his wonderful house at Bourges, we have already given some account. He purchased forty domains, as many châteaux, and possessed twenty-two parishes in land. He brought from Italy artists in architecture, sculpture, painting, picturing on glass, workers in silver, jewellery, silks, and velvets, in order to improve the taste and instruct the French in those fine arts and manufactures, which then could only be learnt from the great Italian masters and artisans.

One of Jacques Cœur's sons, though very young, was nominated Archbishop of Bourges, and his brother Bishop

of Luçon; and, though married, Jacques himself took orders in an inferior rank of ecclesiastical members then open to married men. His chief factors became great men; and so well had he selected them, that all proved honourable in the extensive traffic they carried on.

Truly was Jacques the benefactor of his country; without him and his aid, where would have been the conquests of the north and south? A striking feature of his generous nature was seen in his kindness towards the impoverished nobles and knights of the Court. Many had been ruined by the long wars; not a few by their vices and follies. But poverty and distress never pleaded to Jacques Cœur in vain. His purse was open to these nobles: they drew for loans—seldom small ones—to be repaid *without interest* when convenient to the borrowers.

Jacques Cœur's motto was—'*A vaillants cuers* (cœurs) *rien impossible.*' His rise in the world was then almost without example. Humbly born, he was now a nobleman; proud of his position in the Government, proud of his fame, with wealth that seemed inexhaustible. His factors thriving, his argosies coming home laden with the jewels, the gold, the spices of the East, he thought that his fortunes could not be shaken as other men's were. He felt his own worth, his usefulness, and that he was considered 'deserving of a grandeur that never ceased to grow.' He lived without fear of a reverse. Who was there that he need fear? Not those he had

benefited, had saved! Too little did Jacques reflect on the uncertainty of all earthly conditions; that men may be obliged so much as to tempt them to be ungrateful; that with proud, mean minds, nothing is more offensive than to see an inferior rise above them in wealth, fame, and station. Many of the worthless nobles in the Court of Charles were of this temper, and more especially such as had held Jacques' 'purse as if the strings were theirs.'

Among the enemies of Jacques Cœur were Otto Castellani, a vile Italian,[1] William Gouffier the Chamberlain, and the younger Trémoille, whose necessities had compelled him to sell his lands to the *argentier*, and who hated him for possessing them. La Dame de Villequier, the most artful of harlots, also detested him. These wretches conspired to destroy the object of their common envy and hatred. Well did they know that the debtor who destroys the creditor often finds an easy acquittance. But this was not all. 'Those vultures of the Court,' as Thomas Basin calls them, looked to divide a considerable portion of the spoil that would fall from the lofty fabric of that wealth they were determined to bring down.

There was also one in the council of Charles who leagued with these conspirators; and unfortunately possessing the ear of the weak monarch, poured into it the poison of calumny, to the injury of any one he was desirous to supplant. This man was Antoine de Charbannes, Count de Dammartin. He was brave in

[1] Monstrelet's account of him is most repulsive.

the field, and before the reform of the army had been a captain of the Skinners; nor since his becoming a courtier had he lost his taste for plunder. His lively, witty, pleasant conversation, and total want of morality, rendered him acceptable to Charles in his hours of idleness; and already had he supplanted in the King's favour such men as the Constable, Dunois, and the rough-spoken but sincere and valiant De Brezé. Such a conspiracy as these creatures formed against Jacques Cœur was 'enough to weigh a royal merchant down.' And now, like a horde of wolves seizing an unlucky sheep left outside the protective fold, they fastened on him for destruction. Jacques Cœur had been on good terms with the Dauphin, who ever detested Agnes Sorel. So the conspirators persuaded a woman, the Dame de Montague (whose husband was largely indebted to the merchant for borrowed money), to bring forward a solemn charge against the *argentier*, as the poisoner of Agnes at the instigation of Louis. Nothing could be more absurd, for Agnes so esteemed him that she made him one of her executors.

What shall we say to the cruel negligence of Charles, who, without any inquiry into the truth or the falsehood of this and many other charges, alike groundless and monstrous, caused Jacques Cœur, on the 31st of July 1451, to be suddenly arrested and thrown into prison! The desired result followed, all his property being pronounced under sequestration; and before any judgment

had been given, he was fined one hundred thousand crowns in gold, and a great part of his lands and houses were distributed between the favourites Dammartin and Gouffier, the infamous mistress, and others. The first-named scoundrels were placed at the head of a commission extraordinary, charged to conduct the *procès* of the accused, who, in truth, was thus condemned before he was tried. Well does the psalmist exclaim, 'Oh, put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man!'

Jacques Cœur treated with the contempt it deserved the poisoning accusation. The physician who opened the body of Agnes before she was embalmed, swore to the natural causes of her death. But the conspirators had secured their victim, and now proceeded to accuse him of extortions; with having pillaged large sums from the revenue, and mismanaged the public finances; of having sent armour to the Saracens, and workmen to teach them the fabrication of warlike arms; and above all other offences, with having returned to the Sultan a certain Christian slave who had escaped from his hands.

The charges of malversation in the finances were so barefacedly false, that Jacques' enemies dared not suffer the account books, which would at once have disproved the accusation, to be produced before them. The armour had been sent as a present from the King, by his desire, and with the permission of the Pope, to the Sultan of Egypt, at the time the negotiations were going forward for establishing a peaceful commerce with the Levant.

Jacques Cœur's explanation of the charge concerning the slave showed his wisdom, his foresight, and his sense of honour. He said that he had entered into a treaty with the Sultan, that Egypt and France should forbear carrying off or inveigling each other's subjects. On the observance of this depended the friendly trade between the countries. A Christian slave escaped, managed to get on board a galley that was under the command of one of the factors, and was landed at Marseilles. On Jacques Cœur being informed of the circumstance, and that the slave had escaped without the knowledge of the Sultan, he ordered him to be carried back by the next galley to Egypt; and this was done. He pleaded, in extenuation of the offence, that he did not know at the time that the slave was a Christian; that had he been detained, it would have been considered a violation of the treaty; and lastly, that had he not returned the man, probably hundreds, if not thousands, of Christians would have been seized and reduced to slavery in retaliation, under the plea that the treaty had been violated by the French.

Such were the chief points on which the enemies of Jacques Cœur proceeded against him, with a bitterness and success they never could have achieved had Charles only bestirred himself to act with common justice; for be it remembered, that mediæval kings, when power was in their hands as it was in his, were seldom or never restrained by the laws from interference, when they chose to rescue a favourite, a friend, or a victim. But Charles did

nothing; and the trial—as it will soon appear—came on, and ended in a climax of the most shameful injustice. In the interval, the victim of these cruelties was hurried from prison to prison in the dioceses of Poitiers and Tours, though the Bishops of each vainly interfered in his behalf. Pope Nicholas v., who held Jacques Cœur in great esteem, and to whom the merchant had been sent as an ambassador in 1448, also wrote to Charles with his own hand in his favour, as an honourable and Christian subject of his realm, most unjustly accused and persecuted. It was of no avail.

The interference of the Pope seemed only to augment the hatred of Jacques' enemies; and they now threatened torture, in order to induce him to retract the appeal which for a second time he made to the Church. Greatly to his honour, the Bishop of Poitiers, in the hope to save him, again claimed him as an ecclesiastic charged with offences in his diocese; and he did so with more hope of success, as at that moment the unfortunate man was visited by a severe domestic affliction in the loss of his wife, to whom he was fondly attached. She could not support the calamity that had befallen her beloved husband; and the ruin that threatened her children; she died of grief. But even this touched not the heart of Charles; for though Jacques Cœur was now by his wife's decease *clericus solutus*, and the Church might claim him without impediment, Charles did not command his release from prison, but still left the unfortunate man 'naked to his enemies.' Charles had said that, if Jacques was proved guiltless of the death

of Agnes Sorel, he would forgive all the rest. He was proved so, yet Charles stirred not a finger to save him. The sentence of his malignant judges was pronounced against him in May 1453. He was condemned for exactions, for exporting arms to the infidels, and for the crime of *lèse-majesté*. But for some services rendered to the State (thus slightingly was all the wealth he devoted to recover Normandy and Guienne noticed), and in consequence of his Holiness the Pope having recommended his case for the consideration of the King, his Majesty mercifully remitted the pain of death due to his offences. He was declared incapable of holding any public office, condemned in fines of four hundred thousand crowns in gold; all his property and goods were confiscated to the State, and he was banished the realm for ever. And in order to find an excuse for detaining the victim in prison, the sentence ended with saying, that as for the charge respecting Agnes Sorel, the King gave no judgment upon it. This was monstrous; for at that very time the woman who had accused Jacques Cœur of the poisoning had just been set free, after receiving her punishment for the falsehood and perjury of which she had been guilty in the charge she made against him.

It is impossible to describe the feelings with which Jacques Cœur was overwhelmed at this barbarous return for all the services he had rendered to Charles and to his country. In order to cast the utmost humiliation upon his head, he was compelled to make the *amende honorable;* that

was, to remain on his knees, with a lighted torch in his hand, in view of all the people in a public place at Poitiers. The people were so shocked at the spectacle,—for all believed he was victimized for the sake of his money,—that many wept and groaned in the expression of their concern. This cruelty was followed by the pillage of his property, 'and the hungry dogs of the Court finished by dividing the prey.'[1]

Jacques Cœur was cast into a dungeon. To the honour of human nature be it spoken, all those who had been benefited by him were not ungrateful. During the days of his prosperity he had surrounded himself with honourable men as factors, and nearly all proved faithful to him in his adversity. His nephew, Jean de Village, who directed his commerce at Marseilles, refused to obey the summons to give in the account of his uncle's property to the King for confiscation. The person of De Village was demanded for contumacy; but King René, Count of Provence and Marseilles, peremptorily refused to deliver him up to the power of Charles.

We are not told how he effected it, but eighteen months after the sentence Jacques Cœur managed to escape from his prison, and took shelter with the Cordeliers at Beaucaire. He could not be taken from the sanctuary of the convent walls; but those walls were closely watched. Still he managed to convey a letter to his nephew, in which he said: 'I beg of you, as I would of my own son, for God's sake to set me free of this place, where I doubt not my enemies will

[1] Thomas Basin; Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 176.

cause me to be put to death, even in the sanctuary, without the King's knowledge.' The answer of De Village was only this: 'Be of good cheer; I will set you free.'

De Village resolved to risk his life and all that he possessed to save his uncle; and the generous Cordeliers gave him every assistance. De Village procured two factors who were sea captains, and about twenty stout followers, and sent them forward to Tarascon. At midnight he passed on in a sailing vessel, reached Beaucaire, and entered the town by a breach that was in the ramparts, rushed to the convent, killed the guard who were on the watch, entered the house, and brought off his uncle in safety. The danger would have been too great for him to remain in Provence; therefore with the utmost speed the fugitives gained Nice, where a vessel prepared by De Village awaited them. They proceeded to Pisa, and thence to Rome.

To the honour of Nicholas v. be it recorded, he received the persecuted merchant and his gallant nephew with kindness and distinction, and lodged them in the Vatican. It does not appear that Jacques Cœur left Rome during the remainder of Nicholas' pontificate. Calixtus III., who succeeded him, also treated the fugitive with the most cordial regard. Jacques was skilful whether on land or sea, and hated idleness; and, much to his satisfaction, his Holiness offered him a command against the Turks, who were already preparing to carry out their plan for the ruin of the Greek Empire.

Jacques Cœur accepted the command, went on board,

and sailed. But his constitution was much shaken by his long and arduous career, and his mind deeply wounded by the ingratitude of the King: he never recovered the natural buoyancy of his spirits. He broke down under the weight of his accumulated afflictions, and became so ill that he was obliged to be landed at Chios, where, after praying for the King, and writing him a letter with the hand of death, he expired in 1456.

Jacques Cœur's letter was speedily conveyed to Charles. The contents were most affecting. He implored the King to show compassion to his children, forgave all who had combined to bring about his ruin, and prayed for God's blessing on Charles and on his kingdom. He then bade him 'the last adieu of the dying man, Jacques Cœur.' Even Charles, cold and hard as he was by nature, did not read this letter altogether unmoved. He immediately directed a full pardon to be conveyed to Jean de Village for all he had done to protect and save his uncle; ordered that the whole of the property which had been forfeited to the crown under the condemnation of the merchant should be restored to his family; and he was strictly obeyed. We are glad to have these acts of remorseful justice to place to the honour of Charles' memory. They prove how much he acted from impulse rather than principle. In this instance he was moved by a sudden sense of compunction; had he acted from a higher motive, he would not have waited for a death-bed letter to lead him to do justice to the merits of Jacques Cœur.

CHAPTER XIX.

Great Events of modern History mark the Year 1453—the French recover their Country—Fall of Constantinople—Louis again at Strife with his Father—Commines' Character of him—Louis goes to the Duke of Burgundy—Alençon joins the Dauphin's Party—Richmond succeeds to the Dukedom of Brittany—his Death at Nantes—Charles' last Attempt to conciliate Louis—fears that Louis is plotting against his Life—refuses Food—Distress of his Second Son—the Council write to Louis—Charles dies from Exhaustion and Famine—his Funeral Obsequies—News announced to Louis—Charles VII. as a King—Conclusion.

WO of the greatest events in modern history marked the year 1453—the fall of the English power on the Continent, and the loss of the Christian Empire in the East.[1] The first, as we have seen, arose from their loss of the noblest provinces of France; and the second from the fall of Constantinople, when the standard of the cross gave place to the banner of Mahomet on the walls of that magnificent city. Treasures of ancient art, that spoke the unrivalled excellence of Grecian genius, became the spoil of the conqueror, whilst the pure morals and the holy faith of Christianity were laid in the dust of their defenders; and the sensuous

[1] Henri Martin, Vol. vi.

religion, the barbarity and tyranny of Turkish power, were planted in their stead.

Great had been the shaking of the nations; for though the English were driven out, the people of France had been so drained in blood and treasure, that the time seemed distant when peace could bring forth those fruits which spring from its inestimable blessing. Charles and his son were constantly at variance. So far back as 1446, the Dauphin had refused to comply with his father's request that he would come to Court, and, as heir-apparent, take his place in the Council. Louis at that period preferred ruling as a sovereign in Dauphiny; and though perpetually contradicting and offending, whilst professing the most filial obedience, he expressed such contempt for all his father's wisest counsellors, that every soul among them dreaded him, and thought what might be their own fate if he succeeded to the throne of their master.

Suspicions and accusations seemed for years to form the spirit of the intercourse between these royal personages. Charles was much hurt that Louis would not trust his word for safety, and come to him. But Louis professed to fear that his father would throw him into some fortress, and proclaim his younger brother Charles heir to the crown. So strange a combination of qualities perhaps never before existed in a prince, as that which formed the character of the Dauphin.

Commines, who for many years lived with him, and wrote the fullest account of Louis that has come down to us, says that he was the greatest adept in winning men,

when he needed them for his purpose, that ever existed, and for this object would spare neither pains nor money. He liked, indeed preferred, men of mean estate, some even in low life, as these he could make dependants; and he hated and considered all others as enemies, unless he could make them slaves to his will. He was so given to sarcasm and censure, that he spared no one; but if he found that his freedom of speech had given offence in a quarter that might be injurious to himself, he would make it up at any cost, by smooth words and handsome presents. He was naturally revengeful, but never indulged that passion where it was likely to call forth retaliation.

So skilful was he in artifice of every description, and so accomplished in dissimulation, that it was the most difficult thing in the world to know when he was sincere, unless in cases where his own interest was decidedly concerned. 'In subtle practices,' says his biographer, 'no man living was his match.' He held a most strange and grovelling superstition, partaking of the ridiculous, which he called religion,—'a sort of Fetishism, separated entirely from morality.' He was constantly recommending himself to the saints in paradise, and wore little images of them in lead in his hat. He frequently sent rich gifts to the most famous images, and was most attached to those of the Holy Virgin, particularly our Lady of Embrun and our Lady of Clery. The last was his favourite; for these different images were to him as distinct personages, and he grudged nothing to gain their favour.

On most occasions he was ready to take oaths on a relic or a cross; but he constantly refused to swear by the cross of Saint Louis of Angers, because, if he did so, he must abide by it, for whoever swore by that cross and broke his oath afterwards died miserably within the year.[1] He had a mortal fear of death; and when he was ill, desired those about him, if they thought him in danger, that they should only gently advise him to confess himself and settle his conscience, but not to be sounding in his ears that dreadful word—Death! But as he must die some day, he prayed to the Lady of Clery that it might be on a Saturday, when the gates of heaven were always open.

Sir Walter Scott, in his romance of *Quentin Durward*, has pictured Louis to perfection, founding a scene with his astrologer on the sketch Commines gives of the adroit manner in which Louis' physician learnt to manage his royal patient. Maitre Jacques Clothier was a shrewd fellow, who knew his man. He used to give the King such rough language as a gentleman would hardly give 'to his lowest servant, unless he were a rogue;' and yet Louis so feared him, that he took it with trembling. 'I know well,' said the doctor to him one day boldly—'I know well that you will suspect and command me out of your presence, as you do all your servants. But I tell you that you shall not live eight days after if you do so by me,' confirming his words with an oath and a shake of the hand.

[1] Philip de Commines, Fourth Book, p. 129.

All this put the pusillanimous Louis in such fear, that he flattered and cajoled the doctor, and heaped presents and pensions upon him to the amount of many thousand golden crowns. Oliver, his barber, was also one of his chief counsellors and friends; and as an especial mark of confidence, he generally trusted him to take his presents to the image of Our Lady of Clery.

Louis, as long as he was Dauphin, courted the favour of the Duke of Burgundy, and always called him uncle, to remind him that a sort of family connection was between them, as one of the Duke's wives had been his father's sister. On the occasion of some quarrel between father and son, Charles was so angry, that he prepared to force Louis to a proper sense of his duty. For this purpose the Count Dammartin was to take the command of a battalion and march into Dauphiny, there to seize the Prince, and bring him as a prisoner before his father. But Louis was never without spies in his pay. He learnt the plan, and did not stop to give the Count the trouble of putting it into execution. He fled. Some writers say that he rode sixty miles without stopping, and getting into Brabant, then the territory of the Duke of Burgundy, claimed his protection, and was honourably received by him. But when he would have induced the Duke to take part in his quarrel, Burgundy very properly refused all interference between father and son, except it were of a conciliatory nature. For this purpose negotiations were set on foot, but to no purpose. The father, of

course, would not yield, and the son likewise refused to do so; and things remained just as they were before.

Whilst this was going on, the Countess de Charolais, wife of the Duke's son, gave birth to a prince, and Louis stood godfather to the babe. Soon after Louis sent for his own wife, Charlotte of Savoy, whom he had married some years before, and had not since seen. Charlotte travelled well attended, and was honourably received by the Duke of Burgundy. The year after she gave birth to a prince called Joachim, and the Duke stood sponsor. On the occasion he displayed such magnificence, that Louis, contrary to the custom of an heir-apparent of France, took off his hat, as he said: 'My dear uncle, I can never sufficiently show how grateful I feel for the benefit you have conferred upon me, if I did other than offer you with my acknowledgments my own body and the body of my wife, and the body of my infant son for your service.' The Duke thanked him for this strange offer, and expressed his thanks in a manner as singular as the acknowledgment that had been paid to him; for he threw himself on his knees before Louis, and refused to get up till the Prince put his hat upon his head. It is not easy to say what confidence the Duke might place in so liberal an offer as that just made to him by the Dauphin. But when the circumstances were reported to Charles, he said: 'Ah! my cousin of Burgundy does not know what he is doing in giving shelter to my son Louis; he does not know that he is cherishing the fox that will eat up all his fowls.'

Another trouble awaited Charles at this time. Alençon, that brave prince who fought by the side of Jeanne to recover his kingdom for him, had now joined the party of the Dauphin, and was suspected of having entered into a conspiracy to hand over a part of Normandy to the English. When summoned before Charles, he conducted himself with great *hauteur*, excused his conduct by saying that the Duke of Brittany detained some of the towns over which he was entitled to the lordship, and Charles had forborne to interfere to see him righted. Charles replied that it was impossible he could interfere, and added, with a sigh at Alençon's defection, 'It is most pitiable that I must ever be on my guard against my own blood, and know not in whom to place trust.'

The Duke of Brittany, of whom Alençon complained, died whilst these discontents were in progress, and was succeeded by Arthur Earl of Richmond, the illustrious Constable of France, who, by the death of the two brothers of Duke Francis (Richmond was uncle to the three), became entitled to the ducal crown.

He was advanced in years when this occurred; and some of the nobles of his Court advised him to throw up the office of Constable as unworthy of his dignity. But he would not, and caused to be borne before him two swords: one with the naked point upwards, as pertaining to the Duke of Brittany; the other in the scabbard with the point downwards, as Constable of France. The motive he assigned for still holding office was that he

wished to do honour in his age to a charge which had bestowed honour on him in his earlier years.[1]

Charles called on Richmond to do homage for Brittany as a fief under the crown of France. But the Duke replied that he owed only simple homage, not that of liege-man; for Brittany formed no part of France, and the Dukes of that country did not desire to be Peers of the realm. He consented, however, to do simple homage, and performed the ceremony, but without taking off his girdle or kneeling at the King's feet. He merely pronounced the formula standing erect, with his hands placed within those of Charles. This Duke Arthur, whose memory was long cherished in Brittany, survived the ceremony but two months. He died at Nantes, where a noble monument was raised to his honour in the Church of the Cordeliers.[2]

In December 1459, Charles made an effort to recall his wayward heir. He sent to him the Bishop of Coutances, who was famed for his eloquence. He essayed its power on the Dauphin in the presence of the Duke of Burgundy, and required him to state what were his reasons, hitherto vaguely expressed, for so obstinately keeping aloof from his father and his sovereign, who had not seen him for the last thirteen years.

The Bishop of Arras replied on the part of the Dauphin. Certainly he commenced in a very singular strain, by eulogizing 'the prodigious love' that Louis bore to his

[1] *Mémoires de Richemont.*

[2] *Mémoires de Richemont.* Monstrelet, vol. x. p. 19.

father, and proceeded to state that the son's fears arose from those evil-minded persons who had changed the gentleness of Charles' disposition towards him; for although he fought and helped to discomfit the English, his father had denied him the command of Lieutenant-General of Normandy, and had complained of the army he formed in Dauphiny as too large and threatening. The present time he considered as inconvenient for saying by name who those evil-minded persons were; therefore he confined his answer to the request to be permitted to remain where he was in peaceful exile with the Duke of Burgundy.

So ended the last effort made by the father to win back the refractory son, after many years of inglorious strife.

Charles' failing health became daily more apparent, and he showed no wish for any renewal of military enterprise. As his vital powers declined, in his anger towards Louis he evinced a feeling of resentment in which he had never before indulged. The favourites who were around him in no way discouraged it: for they dreaded the prospect of the Dauphin coming to the throne, and tried every art of persuasion to induce the dying monarch to change the succession, and disinherit the elder in favour of the second son. Some historians assert that Pope Pius II. was consulted on the subject, and wisely prevailed with Charles to make no change, saying truly that such a step as he contemplated would be the means of creating a civil war in France.

Inert, depressed, and having no superior qualities of

mind, and no pursuit worthy a good man, to fall back upon to lighten the burthen of growing age, when the follies of the Court were becoming irksome to him, Charles gave way to *ennui*, now and then exchanged for a short indulgence in his old habits of luxury, which increased the natural infirmities of declining life. There was something touching in what he said to one of his friends not long before his death, on the subject of his son's disobedience: 'If Louis would only once have spoken to me, he knows well that he needed to have neither doubts nor fears. On my word as a King, if he would only have come to me, and have spoken his mind without reserve, and heard my intentions towards him, he might have gone afterwards wheresoever it seemed good to him. I have a firm conviction that when he had once heard my wishes, he would have been more content, more joyful to have remained than to depart from me.'[1]

Sufferings both of body and mind embittered the lingering hours of Charles. His mind was evidently weakened: for he fancied himself surrounded by conspirators, and that he should see revived those scenes of blood which he witnessed in his youth, in the massacre of the Armagnac faction by the populace of Paris. Some one gave him an intercepted letter written by his son, from which it seemed that Louis held a secret intelligence with Dammartin. It was strongly suspected that Louis himself had contrived that the letter should be intercepted, in order to induce

[1] Duclose, in Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 521.

his father to disgrace Dammartin, who had of late incurred Louis' dislike.

Another and a really intercepted letter gave a no less surprise and a severe wound to Charles in one of his weakest and most reprehensible feelings. His worthless mistress, the Dame de Villequier, seeing that the night was closing around her royal patron's days, in order to pay homage to the rising sun, had written a most humble and affectionate letter to the Dauphin, with a view to conciliate her future sovereign. But the climax of horror seemed reserved for the wretched King, when he was induced to believe that he had to fear the machinations of his son aimed against his life. The fear was groundless; but a captain, in whose attachment to his person he entirely confided, told him there was on foot a plot to poison him.

He directly suspected his physician, Adam Fumée, and caused him to be confined in Bourges. On learning this, one of the royal surgeons became so alarmed that he ran away. Charles now suspected every one around him to be a poisoner. Tormented by fear and shaken by weakness, his mind wandered, and an abscess which formed in his mouth he fancied arose from poison. He talked wildly, and would neither touch food nor drink. His son, the amiable and gentle Charles, distressed to see his father sinking from the want of nourishment, knelt at his feet and tasted a variety of meats and drinks before him; but in vain. Charles still obstinately refused food. His mind

was gone; the flickering flame of life, having nothing to feed it, was fast sinking.

The Council, and even Dammartin, seeing that the King was dying, and that it was impossible to alter the succession, deemed it prudent to write and apprise the Dauphin of the state of his father, and to assure him that they one and all entertained the will to serve and obey him as successor to the throne. The letter bore date 17th July 1461.

The young Prince Charles, and those about the King, determined to make an effort to save his life in spite of himself. They forced some liquid nourishment into his mouth, and he swallowed it; but it was too late. For five days more the wretched man lingered, and on the 22d July expired at Mehun, from the exhaustion of famine. Charles at the time of his decease was fifty-seven years old, and had reigned thirty-nine years from the date of his father's death.[1]

Louis, hypocrite though he was, did not even attempt to conceal the satisfaction he felt on learning that his father was no more. The courier who brought him the news killed three horses in the haste he made to be the first to announce it, and Louis rewarded him largely.[2] He did not immediately put on mourning, and directed the Council at once to proceed with the funeral, without waiting for him to attend his father's remains to the grave. Monstrelet says that the Council caused the body of Charles to

[1] *De Pierre de Fenin.*

[2] *Mémoires de Du Clercq*, p. 472.

be embalmed. He gives a long and elaborate account of the obsequies, from which a few particulars may be selected that seem of interest.

The remains of the deceased King were brought from Mehun to Paris by night. All had been previously prepared. On the morrow the body was placed on a car, and a rich pall of crimson velvet and cloth of gold, embroidered with a white cross, was thrown over the coffin. Upon it rested a wax effigy of the King, dressed in a tunic and mantle, enriched with ermine. In one hand was placed the sceptre of justice, in the other that of France. The head, adorned with a jewelled crown, rested on pillows.

The car was drawn by five horses, draped in black velvet that trailed on the ground; and so completely were they covered, that only their eyes could be seen. The chief mourners were the Duke of Orleans, the Counts of Angoulême, Eu, and Dunois: their horses were also draped in black velvet. Two hundred mourners, each bearing a wax taper of four pounds weight, followed the four orders of mendicant Friars; and an innumerable train of nobles, knights, attendants, and people closed the procession. The Church of Notre Dame was hung with black, ornamented with the *fleur de lis*. A service for the dead was performed with great solemnity; and when this was ended, the funeral train again set forward for the Abbey Church of St. Denis, the burial-place of the Kings of France.

According to an ancient privilege, the Salt Porters of Paris claimed to bear the body to its last resting-place.

Six score of them attended on this occasion. Certainly they did not pass on with the solemnity or the peace befitting a burial. Half-way between Paris and St. Denis, the corpse for a short time was placed at the Church of La Chapelle, in order to give rest to the numerous attendants, and for three prayers to be chanted for the dead.[1] But when the procession was about to move forward, the burghers of St. Denis took up the bier, and wanted to carry it to the Abbey Church; for the Salt Porters refused to do so, in consequence of being denied their demand of ten livres each for their pains. The dispute ran high, but the Master of the Horse having promised to satisfy the men, they once more took up the bier and carried it to the church; they did not arrive there till eight o'clock in the evening, too late for the conclusion of the solemnity.

On the morrow a noble company of lords, ladies, and ecclesiastics assembled within the sacred edifice, to witness or assist at the solemn ceremony. A splendid catafalque stood in the centre of the choir, beneath which was placed the body of the King, surrounded with wax tapers. The church was hung with black. The Bishop of Troyes and Chartres performed the service, and the Bishop of Orleans the office. But only one grand mass was said for the deceased monarch. At the close his remains were finally interred in the chapel of his grandfather, where

[1] At regal burials, wherever the corpse rested on the road, prayers were chanted. Edward I. of England erected a cross wherever the body of his Queen Eleanor stopped on its way to the burial.

reposed a long line of his kingly ancestors. The sermon was delivered by Thomas Midi, who preached to Jeanne before her burning; and the customary eulogium at the burial of a sovereign was pronounced on Charles by that Thomas de Courcelles who had been one of the most active agents to compass the death of the heroic Maid. The people wept and crossed their breasts as Thomas prayed Almighty God to pardon the sins and show mercy to the soul of the victorious Charles VII., King of France.[1]

Charles has been considered by some historians as one of the great kings of France; but surely he did not merit that distinction. On the death of his father, more than half his kingdom was in the hands of foreigners; and his first coronation at Poitiers was accomplished in fear, almost in secrecy. Nothing could be more forlorn than his own and his country's position for many years. Yet he made no vigorous effort to surmount it. He was rather like those persons who, we are told, have sometimes, when a ship is sinking, rushed to the spirit-room in order to drown their senses with liquor before the sea drowns them; for he gave himself up to feasting and pleasure, so that La Hire could say of him, 'Never before did he see a Prince who lost his kingdom so merrily.'

When we look back and endeavour to trace what germs of good appeared in him about that period, the best we can find sprang from an easy temper. He did not oppose

[1] Monstrelet, vol. x. p. 100; *Mémoires de Jean de Troye*, p. 13; Henri Martin, vol. vi. p. 521; *Histoire de France*, p. 251.

good advice, when it came from an agreeable quarter; but he did not act upon it with a spirit and perseverance to make it effective. When almost in despair, he thought of abandoning for ever the land of his birth, and, by an inscrutable providence, a change was wrought to redeem him and his kingdom from utter ruin, he became rather the witness than the doer of great deeds. What human foresight could have anticipated the raising up of a Joan of Arc? Could the wisest counsellors have so planned Charles' affairs, that the sceptre which had passed into an alien's hand should be wrested from it by a shepherd Maid? The liberation of France was not accomplished by the King's policy.

France was at the lowest ebb, her enemies were powerful, but her defenders were of God! Joan of Arc, La Hire, Dunois, Richmond, Saintrailles, Alençon, wrought wonders, not in obedience to, but in despite of Charles. At length he was roused from his apathy, and then he showed himself not wanting in that courage which is inherent in the French nation. By all accounts, he was roused by female persuasion; and the case affords an illustration of the power of woman's influence with man, and of its great value when well directed. Men, accustomed to attain their ends with comparative ease by the union of stronger intellect and greater physical power, are more easily discouraged by difficulty than women. A woman of good sense, ready resource, and delicate tact, being at the same time less sensitive to the wounded pride of defeat,

has more in her of real endurance than is usually found in the sex that is more highly endowed.

His wife's mother Yolande, his wife, and above all Agnes Sorel, roused Charles from his pleasure-loving indolence to a spirit of exertion. He headed his army, and proved himself, as has been said, brave as a man, though never great as a general. One of the worst features of his character was exhibited in his conduct towards his gentle wife, whose merits he acknowledged, but whose feelings he outraged.[1] It might be said perhaps, by way of palliation, that his immoralities were so common to the age in which he lived, as scarcely to be considered criminal in a prince.

But what can be said to extenuate his ingratitude towards Joan of Arc, who placed the crown upon his head; to Jacques Cœur, who, in laying at his sovereign's feet the wealth he had gained by the creation of a national commerce, was the principal means of enabling him to form the army which restored to France Normandy and Guienne? True that justice was rendered, though tardily, to the memory of both. But this did not arise from any remorse on the part of Charles. The force of public opinion, and the vindication of his own character from the imputation of having been served by a sorceress, led to the revision of the *procès*. Tardy indeed was the act

[1] Marie of Anjou, Charles' Queen, survived him eighteen months. She died in November 1463, on her return from a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James in Galicia, and was buried at the Abbey of Chastelliers in Poitou. Moreri's *Dictionnaire Historique.*

of justice which restored to the children of the unfortunate merchant some portion of the spoil so shamefully made of his property.

When the foreign foe was driven from the land, and there was leisure to amend what was amiss in the State, it must be remembered that the transformation of the army from a body of marauding ruffians into a well-disciplined soldiery was due to the genius and the exertions of Richmond; and that the improvement in the civil ordinances and the finance, together with the establishment of the liberties of the Gallican Church, arose from the wisdom and the perseverance of the Council, of which Jacques Cœur for so long a period was one of the wisest and the most disinterested members. That Charles saw the necessity of these changes and reforms, and sanctioned them, deserves commendation; and as he was the head of the State, his subjects naturally ascribed to him the merit of them.

His abilities never rose above mediocrity. He found how much he was benefited by the services of able and devoted men, and he had the good sense to confide in them, and in some instances to reward them. But even in this, his weaknesses often neutralized his better deeds. Through his fondness for worthless favourites, Richmond was supplanted by an Antoine de Charbannes, and an Agnes Sorel by a Madame de Villequier. His son Louis was a perpetual thorn in his side, and he never had the resolution to chastise that troublesome Prince with firm-

ness, when he had the power, as a rebel to the State and an ill example to the people. After duly weighing all his merits, the best perhaps that could be said of Charles as a King, was expressed by the short inscription on his tomb, that he was 'well served, and victorious.'

THE END.

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